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Prayer in a Time of Sin

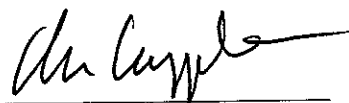
A Comparative Analysis of Christian, Buddhist, and Kashmiri Shaiva Doctrines

A Thesis by
Viresh Hughes

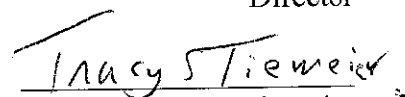
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Committee Signatures



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Introduction

Soteriological traditions are founded upon the premise that humanity must attain liberation, salvation, or freedom *from* an inherently pitiable, ‘sinful’ condition in favor of another, more favorable condition. The most frequent word designating ‘sin’ in the Christian bible is the Greek word *hamartia*, which literally means “missing the mark,” a tendency that is acknowledged by every soteriology to be inherent to the human condition. This thesis will examine a) the “mark” (i.e., the Real) as it is proclaimed by Christianity, Buddhism, and Kashmir Shaivism, b) their respective reasons for humanity’s inability to “hit the mark” (i.e., recognize or obtain to the Real), and c) their prescriptions for “hitting the mark.” The reason for this undertaking is for the sake of accurately diagnosing and treating humanity’s ‘sinful’ condition.

Presuppositions

Before commencing with this analysis a question arises: are humans, finite as we are both cognitively and physically, capable of comprehending the Real? According to John Hick, “It is entirely reasonable for the religious person experiencing life in relation to the transcendent—whether encountered beyond oneself or in the depths of one’s own being—to believe in

the reality of that which is thus apparently experienced.”¹ As such, there is no reason to proclaim one’s own faith as veridical and others not. According to Hick, “the great post-axial faiths constitute different ways of experiencing, conceiving and living in relation to an ultimate divine Reality which transcends all our varied visions of it.”² In order to maintain the integrity of the Real as it is in itself (*Ding an sich*), he makes a distinction between the intentional object (i.e., the Real) and the varied human “visions” and subsequent conceptualizations of it. Why? As St. Thomas Aquinas observes: “Things known are in the knower according to the mode of the knower.”³ Consequently, the distinction is necessary because of the human intellect’s inability to wholly comprehend the eternal scope of the Real. Yet, if indeed the Real *in toto* is ineffable, Hick asks, “what reason could we have to affirm it?”⁴ As every religion intellectually refers to the Real in some way or another, we must deduce that the Real does, in fact, “have the property of being able to be referred to.”⁵ Even with the approach of *via negativa* (e.g., “The ultimate Reality is not this, not that...” *ad infinitum*), the Real becomes effable, albeit indirectly. Hick proclaims:

the pluralistic hypothesis that the great world faiths embody different perceptions and conceptions of, and correspondingly different responses to, the Real from within the major variant ways of being human; and that within each of them the transformation of human existence from self-

¹ John Hick. *An Interpretation of Religion*. (London: Yale University Press, 1991), 236.

² Ibid., 236.

³ Ibid., 241.

⁴ Ibid., 239.

⁵ Ibid., 239.

centredness to Reality-centredness is taking place...as alternative soteriological 'spaces' within which, or 'ways' along which, men and women can find salvation/liberation/ultimate fulfillment.⁶

Religions, for the most part, proclaim the existence of a transcendent state of being (i.e., the Real) that can be realized or obtained through particular means geared around certain proclaimed ontological suppositions. It is the business of theology to grapple with these suppositions in order to provide a suitable and efficient soteriology for realizing the One, ultimate reality. The initial task, then, is to discover the precise ontology of the One (i.e., the Real) in relation to the Many in order to provide the seeker with an adequate 'map' with which they may find their way back to the One. I begin with an examination of the ontology of the One and the Many as proclaimed by the Christian witness followed by a comparative examination of Buddhist and Kashmiri Shaiva proclamations of the same.

Christianity

The Abrahamic traditions look toward the Genesis account of creation in order to discover the foundation of universal existence. According to the Genesis creation story, it was God who "created the heavens and the earth." (Gen 1:1) The *substance* out of which creation was produced, however, is not quite clear. The Gospel of John, which will be discussed further, lends more clarity to the question. For now, suffice it to say that Christian theologians

⁶ John Hick. *An Interpretation of Religion*. (London: Yale University Press, 1991), 240.

have concluded that God created something (i.e., creation) out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*).

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) drafted a statement of faith that confessed belief in one triune God, creator of all things, visible and invisible, who, by divine and omnipotent power, created each creature from nothing.⁷ Its purpose was to defend against Manichean dualism, which argued that matter was inherently evil because it was created out of nothing by God's polar opposite: the King of Darkness. Then, at the Council of Florence in 1442, it was again affirmed that God created a good creation out of a 'good' nothing. Only after that pronouncement did dualistic ideas about creation cease to trouble the Roman Catholic Church. Interestingly, the council refuted Manichean dualism with yet another dualistic formulation, i.e., the universe was still considered to be created out of 'nothing,' which, logically speaking, must be considered 'something' that is radically different from God. Predominant Christian theology, however, does not deny the duality of God and creation, but rather, vehemently affirms it as Karl Barth proclaims:

Creaturely reality means reality on the basis of a *creatio ex nihilo*, a creation out of nothing...through God there has come into existence that which is distinct from Him.⁸ The creation of the world is not a movement of God in himself, but a free opus ad extra, which has its necessary ground only in his love, yet not calling his self-sufficiency in question.⁹

'Holiness' is a term oft used in Christian discourse to identify God in

⁷ Fiorenza, Francis and John P. Galvid, eds. *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives Vol. 1* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 219.

⁸ Karl Barth. *Dogmatics in Outline*. (Harper Perennial, 1959), 55.

⁹ Karl Barth. *Credo*. (Wipf and Stock, 2005), 32.

contrast to creation. The New Catholic Encyclopedia defines holiness as “the state or character a thing has by being set apart and specially dedicated to God and His service.”¹⁰ “God’s holiness is His absolute transcendence, or otherness,”¹¹ which, according to Karl Barth, lies in His absolute freedom,¹² His absolute independence in contrast to the absolute creaturely dependence on Him. Creation, as Abe Masao notes, owes its “existence to God alone, the world, if left to itself, inevitably tends to nothingness.”¹³ Yet, according to Bultmann, it is not a question of whether creation *will* tend to nothingness without the support of God, but rather, since creation is in fact composed of ‘nothing,’ it has already tended towards nothingness: “This, then, is the primary thing about faith in creation: the knowledge of the nothingness of the world and of our own selves, the knowledge of our complete abandonment.”¹⁴ If we take a closer look at the precise terminology used by the biblical witness, however, we discover a more unitive ontology, which contends the possibility of humanity’s “abandonment.”

The Gospel of John testifies to the radical unity of creation and God through the Word: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (Jn 1:1)...and Jesus is the Word (Jn 1:14).

¹⁰ As cited by Mahmoud Ayoub, Irfan A. Omar. *A Muslim View of Christianity*. (New York: Orbis Books, 2007), 73.

¹¹ Ibid., 73.

¹² Karl Barth. *Credo*. (Wipf and Stock, 2005), 31.

¹³ Abe Masao, “Buddhism and Christianity as a Problem of Today, Pt. II in *Japanese Religions* Vol. 3, issues 3-4 (1963): 10.

¹⁴ Rudolf Bultmann. *Existence and Faith*. (New York: Meridian Books/Living Age, 1960), 177.

Further, the Word may also be equated with Light, which, according to the Genesis account, brought forth creation from ‘formlessness and darkness’ into form, and therefore, into existence and that which enables existence must itself comprise the very fabric of all existents. Likewise, for John, it is through Jesus, the eternal Christ (i.e., the Word and Light), that “all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” (Jn. 1:3) In other words, everything has, is, and will be made *with* the Word and Light, which is Christ and Christ is God. According to the Gospel of John, however, the recognition of the unity of God and creation is wholly dependent upon belief in Christ as the one who is eternally united with God, which is made evident by Jesus’ prayer to his Father for all who will believe in him, “that all might be one, as you, Father, in me, and I in you, that they may be one in us.” (John 17:21) In other words, it is only through the acceptance of God’s kenotic entry into the Incarnation that creation and humanity are given access to God’s holiness. Meister Eckhart, however, in his commentary on John notes:

The One acts as a principle (*principiat*) through itself and gives existence and is an internal principle (*principium*). For this reason, properly speaking, it does not produce something like itself, but what is one and the same as itself...¹⁵

Similarly, Wilkie Au eloquently states: “The world is the vocabulary of God...We may find that which makes us whole, which undergirds our lives

¹⁵ Bernard McGinn. *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001), 75.

with the certainty of dignity and value, at any point in our experience...”¹⁶ In other words, the unity of God and creation is a primordial condition, which, although may be affirmed by the Incarnation, is not substantiated by it.

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, God is ‘pure act’ and is therefore completely devoid of potential. Creation, on the other hand, lies in the field of potentiality, capable of being actualized only by that First being who is eternally actualized, i.e., God. He said: “actuality is prior to potentiality; for whatever is in potentiality can be reduced into actuality only by some being [already] in actuality.”¹⁷ Every existent is real insofar as it participates in some form of activity, and that which enables activity, and therefore existence, is that which is eternally active. Creation, therefore, is inextricably bound with God. According to Thomistic metaphysics:

The bond of unity comes from diverse participations in the act of existence, the common perfection embracing all levels of being, finite to infinite, deriving from the Ultimate Source, the pure Subsistent Act of Existence with no limiting essence, which is God.¹⁸

As such, God is said to ‘transcend’ creation. Norris Clarke notes, however, that the notion of transcendence, as it is applied to God’s being is:

...all-inclusive, both in its comprehension (i.e., the content included in its meaning) and in its extension (the range of subjects to which it can be applied). Thus being signifies all that is, in everything that is, i.e., everything that is real in any way. Outside of this lies only “nothing” or

¹⁶ Wilkie Au, *The Enduring Heart: Spirituality for the Long Haul*. (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2000), 96.

¹⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*. trans., Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Switzerland: Benzinger Brothers, 1947), (STI.q3.a1), http://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa.FP_Q1.html

¹⁸ Norris Clark. *The One and the Many* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 77.

nothingness, non-being. For this reason, the concept of being is called “transcendental” (from the Latin transcended = to climb over), that is, transcending or leaping over all divisions, categories, and distinctions between and within beings, pervading them all. It excludes only non-being.”¹⁹

God’s transcendence, according to Clarke, implies, not His ‘otherness,’ but rather His absolute immanence with the exception of non-being; God as being pervades creation and therefore, becoming. As such, being *is* becoming, which is also testified to by earliest testament of God’s being as revealed in Exodus by God’s Self: “I am who I am.” (Ex 3:14) Abe Masao notes:

Specialists in the field are now saying that that the Hebrew word “*hāyāh*” means not simply “to be” but “to become” and “to work” as well. It may also mean “to happen.” Accordingly, the Christian God is by no means sheer “Being” but rather “the dynamic unity of being and becoming.”²⁰

Similarly, Meister Eckhart proclaims that the notion of being as it is alluded to in Exodus

...indicates the purity of affirmation excluding all negation from God. It also indicates the reflexive turning back of his existence into itself and upon itself and its dwelling and remaining fixed in itself. It further indicates a “boiling” or giving birth to itself—glowing into itself, and melting and boiling in and into itself, light that totally forces its whole being in light and into light and that is everywhere turned back and reflected upon itself.”²¹

Quite contrary to Barth, who held that the creation of the world is “not a movement of God in himself,” Eckhart proclaims that creation is the result of being (i.e., God) “‘boiling’ or giving birth to itself...that is everywhere turned

¹⁹ Norris Clark. *The One and the Many* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 43.

²⁰ Abe Masao, “Buddhism and Christianity as a Problem of Today, Pt. II” in *Japanese Religions* Vol. 3, issues 3-4 (1963): 14.

²¹ Bernard McGinn. *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart*. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001), 73.

back and reflected upon itself.” Why, then, are we unable to perceive the One in the Many? Eckhart, in his sermon, “The Nobleman,” states:

In distinction you cannot find unity, nor being, nor God, nor rest, nor blessedness, nor enjoyment. Be one, so that you can find God. Truly, if you were really one, you would remain one even in distinction and distinction would be one for you, and nothing at all would be in your way.²²

Distinctive perception, according to Eckhart, disables humanity from being and knowing the One. With this in mind, I will now turn my attention to the Fall of mankind as it is described in Genesis, for it is there that humanity loses the ability to be and know the One in the midst of the Many.

The Fall

According to the traditional Judeo-Christian understanding, humanity’s fall was the result of disobeying God’s commandment not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Interestingly, there has been no discussion as to the possible adverse effects of obtaining the knowledge of good and evil. Rather, the fall was believed to have resulted from the act of disobedience in itself. Historically, Judaism has not emphasized the initial disobedience as an event in which the nature of humanity and creation were forever changed. For Judaism, this event simply revealed the inherently flawed nature of humanity, which is to be countered by strictly adhering to the negative commandments of the Decalogue. Christianity, on the other

²² Bernard McGinn. *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart*. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001), 97.

hand, emphasized a radical ontological change in the human person and creation as a result of the transgression and looks toward the incarnation of Jesus Christ as the only means of transcending the human condition.

The *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, which is an English translation of the Torah, informs us that in the beginning, “The two of them were wise, Adam and his wife, but they did not remain in their glory.”²³ While residing in Eden, Adam was instructed to give “names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to all the wild beasts.”²⁴ In this respect, it would seem he was not only ‘wise,’ but also discerning so as to distinctively describe things in accordance with the creatures’ form and function. So, there appears to be a sense of duality within human consciousness prior to the fall, however, there is no mention of the sense of the ‘good’ or ‘evil’ aspects of things, which, when examined further, is precisely what seems to have occurred after the fall. The writer of *Sirach* states that knowledge and wisdom are the gifts of God, “not something forbidden to humankind and acquired through stealth.”²⁵

In the *Torah*, the expression “good and bad” sometimes means “everything” {see *Deuteronomy* 1:39 and II *Samuel* 19:35-36} as when we say, “I know its good and its bad features,” meaning that I know everything about

²³ Evam, Kristen E., Linda S. Schearing and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds. *Eve & Adam*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 105.

²⁴ Genesis 2:19-20.

²⁵ Evam, Kristen E., Linda S. Schearing and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds. *Eve & Adam*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 43.

it that can be known.²⁶ If this were to be the case, are we to assume that the ‘naming’ episode, which occurred while Adam knew not of good and bad, ought to be viewed as a superficial act, i.e., as an act, which did not take into account ‘everything that can be known?’ In what way would Adam have been wise, if not superficially? As God created everything to be good, not bad, wisdom must have entailed understanding the fundamental goodness of all things. There could have been no possibility of knowing the bad qualities of things because in reality, they simply could not have existed. The knowledge of the good alone would have been sufficient for one to know ‘everything.’ The goodness of creation was, and therefore must continue to remain, not merely a subjective reality, but the objective reality of all things.

The original Edenic environment was such that it did not encourage privation insofar as everything was provided for in abundance; there was no need for possessions, and therefore no sense of ownership, e.g., “this is mine,” “that is not mine,” etc. In examining the devious activity of the serpent while luring Eve into eating the fruit, *The Apocalypse of Moses* observes that the origin of every sin, which was introduced by the actions of the serpent itself, is covetousness (19.1 – 20).²⁷ After disobeying God’s singular commandment and having their eyes opened to good and bad phenomena (i.e., duality), the natural abundance they had previously

²⁶ Jenkins, Everett. *The Creation*. (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003), 148.

²⁷ Evam, Kristen E., Linda S. Scheering and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds. *Eve & Adam*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 61.

enjoyed was no longer unconditional, the consequence of which God says: “by the sweat of your brow shall you get bread to eat.”²⁸ Man was now commissioned to fend for his own security, which unavoidably brought about egoistic tendencies of which God foretold the results: “I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers. They shall strike at your head and you shall strike at their heel.”²⁹ With the rise of self-consciousness, i.e., ego, mankind was now liable to experience suffering.

Of the continued consumption of the tree of knowledge of good and bad, God said: “By toil shall you eat of it, all the days of your life.”³⁰ The *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* thus proclaims: “from [Adam] there will arise those who will know how to distinguish good from evil.”³¹ God knew that mankind would continue to desire to eat of the tree, seeking false-fulfillment through the knowledge of good and evil. Humanity is trapped in a vicious cycle of perpetual suffering brought about its continued propensity to differentiate God’s creation, which in actuality was/is completely good and therefore ought not be differentiated at all! Although there was a multiplicity of created things, there was in effect no distinction within the objective world prior to the fall. Inherent in the fall was the subsequent suffering brought about by newly perceived distinctions, which need not be considered a ‘punishment’

²⁸ Genesis 3:19.

²⁹ Genesis 3:15.

³⁰ Genesis 3:17.

³¹ Evam, Kristen E., Linda S. Schearing and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds. *Eve & Adam*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 106.

per se, as if it were a spell cast upon humanity by another agency. Rather, it may very well be viewed as a self-inflicted condition.

According to the dominant rabbinic tradition, “the sin of Adam resulted in mortality for humankind and did not constitute a qualitative change in the nature of the species.”³² Judaism does not consider humankind to have been genetically mutated by the effects of the historical sin, which as we shall see, is oft proclaimed by Christian scholars. While man tended to corruption, man was not basically a corrupt creature.³³ Indeed, how could he be since man and woman were created in the image of divinity? According to Rabbinic thought, humankind’s propensity toward corruption was an inborn yearning for *hubris*, or self-exaltation. “The Tale may therefore be understood to say that primal man ate of the Tree of Omniscience, man forever after will attempt to know everything. Man will, in other words, forever aspire to play the part of, and even to be, God.”³⁴ If, as the traditional rendering of humanity’s fall is understood, we anticipated becoming like God by knowing good and evil, we verily succeeded insofar as we obtained conceptions of good and evil and therefore must have succeeded in becoming like God as God Himself had acknowledged (Gen 3:22). But this is far from the case. We, in effect, ‘fell’ by becoming like God, which seems to prove quite the opposite, i.e., God must, by logical necessity, not know of good and evil—

³² Jenkins, Everett. *The Creation*. (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003), 143.

³³ *Ibid.*, 149.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 148.

this was our original state of grace under God.

On account of obtaining the knowledge of good and evil, mankind was banished from Eden and therefore banished from the fruit of the tree of eternal life. Evidently, mankind is unable to possess both discriminative knowledge *and* immortality. Since man chose knowledge, mortality is now built into the very structure of human life, ultimately distinguishing the creature from the creator.³⁵ If this is true, it would seem only logical that if by repenting the acquisition of discriminative knowledge, one may achieve immortality and again take up residence in Eden. *Numbers Rabbah* 13.3 states:

When Adam transgressed the commandment of the Holy One, blessed be he, and ate of the tree, the Holy One, blessed be He, desired that he should repent, and He gave him an opening, but Adam did not do so.³⁶

According to Judaism, the episode in Eden was read as exemplary or allegorical of an always extant human condition and an always existing propensity to sin.³⁷ Is it possible for us to ‘repent’ and reclaim our divine status and overcome our disgraced and sinful existence?

The mainstream of Judaism has refused to make the tale of Eden an important part of its worldview and maintained that the only road to salvation was through godly deeds (*mitzvoth*); for the Jews, the more closely man attends to godly deeds—to *mitzvoth*—the greater would be man’s

³⁵ Jenkins, Everett. *The Creation*. (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003), 150.

³⁶ Evam, Kristen E., Linda S. Scheering and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds. *Eve & Adam*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 96.

³⁷ Jenkins, Everett. *The Creation*. (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003), 143.

protection from sin.³⁸ That is, the stricter one's adherence to God's ten commandments, the nearer one would come to the original state of grace. In *The Apocalypse of Moses*, God states:

But when you come out of Paradise, if you guard yourself from all evil, preferring death to it, at the time of the resurrection I will raise you again, and then there shall be given to you from the tree of life, and you shall be immortal forever. (28.1)³⁹

One of the traits of the Old Testament story, sometimes linked with bloody battles but also sometimes notably free of violence, is the identification of YHWH as the God who saves his people without their needing to act.⁴⁰ Upon facing impending doom by the hands of the Egyptians, God tells the Israelites:

Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which we will work for you today; For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be still. (EXOD. 14:13)

As the story goes, the Israelites were saved without raising a single arm. Their entire faith was based on such miraculous events in which they were simply called upon to have unconditional faith in YHWH and remain *still*. Further, one's adherence to the negative commandments of the Decalogue culminates in stillness through the complete avoidance of adverse behavior even in the midst of adversity. Historically, Judaism is a faith whereby a believing people would be saved despite their weakness, on

³⁸ Jenkins, Everett. *The Creation*. (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003), 149.

³⁹ Evam, Kristen E., Linda S. Schearing and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds. *Eve & Adam*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 63.

⁴⁰ Yoder, John Howard. *The Politics of Jesus*. (Carlisle, UK: The Paternoster Press, 1999), 76.

condition that they ‘be still and wait to the see the salvation of the LORD.’⁴¹

Rather than acting upon one’s inclinations, which undoubtedly would emerge from notions of personal justice in the face of adversity, the Jews were instructed to leave aside such inclinations and just remain still and maintain complete faith in their Lord.

In contrast with Judaism, Christianity made the tale of Eden an important part of its worldview. Like Judaism, Christianity affirms everything in existence to be produced by God, upon whose existence all existents, both animate and inanimate, depend. Christianity also recognizes the inherent goodness of creation itself, especially man who was made in God’s image. Augustine proclaimed the “fundamental goodness of physicality, marriage, and sexual intercourse”⁴² both before and after the fall. According to Balthasar Hubmaier, “before the transgression of Adam all three substances in the human being—flesh, soul, and spirit—were good.”⁴³ According to St. Paul however, the goodness of creation was radically altered by the original sin and the universe and man are now “damaged, disrupted, subject to futility, and groaning while it awaits transformation (Romans 8).”⁴⁴ Likewise, the Gospel of Luke states that “all humans are now

⁴¹ Yoder, John Howard. *The Politics of Jesus*. (Carlisle, UK: The Paternoster Press, 1999), 85.

⁴² Evam, Kristen E., Linda S. Scheering and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds. *Eve & Adam*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 147.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 263.

⁴⁴ Neville, Robert Cummings. *Ultimate Realities* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 71.

hopelessly lost and in need of a Savior.”⁴⁵

According to John Chrysostom, “The human being, creature though he was, had the good fortune to enjoy the highest esteem and was scarcely inferior in any respect to the angels, as blessed David also says, “You have placed him on a level scarcely lower than the angels,” and even this “scarcely lower” was the result of the disobedience.”⁴⁶ De Rosa notes two preternatural gifts that Adam and Eve enjoyed while residing in Eden. They were immune from concupiscence (i.e., desire) and they were free from death, since death was the punishment for disobedience.⁴⁷ Desire was not an issue because everything was provided for in abundance and therefore, there was nothing more to be desired. Death was not a concern because as M.J. Link, S.J. in *Christ Teaches Us Today* states, “A special providence of God protected him against anything that would harm him. Adam need never worry about germs or poisons. Accidents could not touch him” (Chicago: Loyola, 1964, p. 60).⁴⁸ So, what went wrong?

John Chrysostom reasons that Adam and Eve must have experienced a certain deprivation while residing in Eden. He states: “What is the advantage of life in the garden when you aren’t free to enjoy the things in it, but are even worse off in incurring the more intense pain of having sight of

⁴⁵ Luke 15:1-32; 16:1-13.

⁴⁶ Evam, Kristen E., Linda S. Scheering and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds. *Eve & Adam*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 144.

⁴⁷ De Rosa, Peter. *Christ and Original Sin*. (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1967), 80.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

things but missing out on the enjoyment that comes from possessing them.”⁴⁹

Chrysostom apparently envisions paradise to be something of a purgatory, possibly even hellish, however, this idea seems altogether unpalatable given the very notion of ‘paradise.’ Nevertheless, he discovers the ontological shortcoming of the human intellect. Our ability to know something is wholly dependent upon knowing its opposite. While in Eden, our knowledge could only have pertained to goodness because everything around us was good. Yet it could be argued that since everything was of one kind (i.e., good), we were unable to realize the glory of our environment since multiplicity without distinction would not elicit any distinctive perception at all. Even amongst one another, there was no perceived difference since both man and woman were identical in image. Adam and Eve had no frame of reference and therefore we were essentially blind. Their anxieties for obtaining a definitive point of reference may have proved sufficient in succumbing to consuming the fruit of differentiated knowledge.

According to Christian understanding, “the seriousness of the offence lies in Adam and Eve’s deliberate willful rejection of God’s explicit command.”⁵⁰ If indeed the first humans disobeyed by eating of the tree of good and bad, how is it possible that humanity throughout history have disobeyed in the same manner when no one since the first humans has had

⁴⁹ Evam, Kristen E., Linda S. Scheering and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds. *Eve & Adam*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 144.

⁵⁰ Jenkins, Everett. *The Creation*. (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003), 267.

the opportunity of choosing otherwise? As J.A.T. Robinson, the Bishop of Woolwich has accurately said, “It is not enough to say that every man is his own Adam, because in this matter no one starts from scratch.”⁵¹ Nevertheless, by understanding Paul to say “in whom (Adam) all sinned” Augustine influenced the whole of subsequent theology in Western Christendom.⁵²

Augustine held that pride was the primary sin of the first human, of which man throughout history commits again and again. Indicating Adam’s refusal to place blame upon himself for his own transgression, Augustine notes that “men today are suffering from the disease of pride as they try to make their Creator responsible for any sin they commit, while they want attributed to themselves any good they do.”⁵³ Augustine goes on to state that the root cause of sin is “the sort of attachment and affection by which it often happens that we offend God while we try to keep the friendship of men.”⁵⁴ Hubmaier concurs in stating: “he willed to eat of this fruit against his own conscience in order not to grieve or anger his rib and flesh, Eve.”⁵⁵ Thus, according to Augustine and Hubmaier, the primary reason for humanity’s continued transgression lies in the fact that ever since Adam, we tend to fear

⁵¹ De Rosa, Peter. *Christ and Original Sin*. (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1967), 90.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 100.

⁵³ Evam, Kristen E., Linda S. Schearing and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds. *Eve & Adam*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 152.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 264.

the judgment of our fellow man more than we fear the judgment of God. Interestingly, they proclaim this human tendency to have existed even in Eden, which implies that differentiated perception and egotistical conceptions were in fact a primordial condition.

According to Balthasar Hubmaier, the fall of humanity resulted in two ‘wounds.’ First, it resulted in humanity’s ignorance of good and evil.⁵⁶ That is, the consumption of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil in fact had the opposite effect: it took away mankind’s pre-existing ability to know good versus evil. Staying true to his aforementioned definition of sin, he is again implying that man originally possessed discriminative knowledge while residing in innocence. Hubmaier claims that although the three human substances (flesh, soul, and spirit) were wholly good they were also “wholly free to choose good or evil, life or death, heaven or hell.”⁵⁷ Indeed, they must have been free to choose such things, for this is exactly what occurred, i.e., they chose ‘evil, death, and hell’ over and above Eden. Hubmaier, however, is too quick to place knowledge of evil, death and hell in the minds of innocents, for if they knew the suffering that such choices entailed, they most assuredly would not have chosen them. According to Hubmaier, the knowledge of good and evil were in fact possessed by the primordial humans and that only by relearning the knowledge of good and evil through the Word

⁵⁶ Evam, Kristen E., Linda S. Scheering and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds. *Eve & Adam*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 265.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 263.

of Christ can we ever hope to regain entry into paradise.

The second wound is external, in doing and acting; the human being cannot wholly complete and hold the commandments of God on account of the inborn evil in his flesh; rather in all his works he is a useless servant, Luke 17:10.⁵⁸ Hubmaier is again alluding to Adam's inability to abide by God's commandment while conceding to Eve's request to partake in the consumption of the fruit. On account of this transgression, humanity is no longer able to serve the will of God because mankind is now useless and therefore, 'dead.' According to the authors [of the New Testament], after sin man is not simply condemned to die, he has died [and] he still walks the earth but as a dead man.⁵⁹ The death spoken of is not physical but of a spiritual and moral kind. Moral death consisted of the death of God's life in the man and woman and their nature becoming sinful; spiritual death meant that their former relationship to God was destroyed.⁶⁰ According to Christianity, the death of mankind is overcome through Christ as St. Paul states: "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."⁶¹ The chapter on praxis will explore how this is accomplished. I will now turn my attention to the Buddhist and Kashmiri Shaiva notion of *saṃsāra*, a condition comparable to Judeo-Christian conception of sin.

⁵⁸ Evam, Kristen E., Linda S. Schearing and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds. *Eve & Adam*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 265.

⁵⁹ De Rosa, Peter. *Christ and Original Sin*. (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1967), 105.

⁶⁰ Jenkins, Everett. *The Creation*. (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003), 267.

⁶¹ 1 Cor. 15:22.

Buddhism

Buddhism and Kashmir Shaivism both consider differentiated experience to be the cause of *saṃsāra*, the painful cycle of repeated births and deaths, while also maintaining that the differentiated universe is, upon final analysis, identical to the undifferentiated (*nirvikalpa*) Absolute: *śūnyatā* and Lord *Śiva* respectively. This analysis will examine their shared understanding of the mechanics of perception (*pratītyasamutpāda*) and the subsequent rise of *saṃsāra*. To begin, the philosophical environment in which the Buddha formulated his own brand of thought will be discussed. Anālayo notes:

At the time of the Buddha, a variety of philosophical positions on causality were current in India. Some teachings claimed that the universe was controlled by an external power, either an omnipotent god or a principle inherent in nature. Some took man to be the independent doer and enjoyer of action. Some favoured determinism, while others completely rejected any kind of causality. Despite their differences, all these positions concurred in recognizing an absolute principle, formulated in terms of the existence (or absence) of a single or first cause.⁶²

The Buddha, in his pursuit of discovering the cause of suffering (*duḥkka*), proposed a radically different theory of causality. In the course of the Buddha's own approach to awakening, recollection of his past lives and the sight of other beings passing away and being reborn vividly brought home to him the truths of impermanence and conditionality on a personal and

⁶² Anālayo. *Satipaṭṭhāna*. (Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 2003), 107.

universal scale.⁶³ These experiences led the Buddha to formulate the doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda*, dependent co-arising, which is the clarification of the second Noble Truth: “suffering has a cause.” His conception of dependent co-arising was so decisive a departure from existing conceptions of causality that he came to reject all of the four prevalent ways of formulating causality: the Buddha denied that *duḥkha* (suffering) was caused by oneself, by others, by both, or by neither (i.e., arisen by chance).⁶⁴

Subjective experience, which he discovered to be the root of all suffering, was dependent upon the five aggregates, or *skandhas*: *rupa* (form), *vedana* (feeling or sensation), *samjñā* (perception), *saṃskāra* (mental formation or volition), and *viññāna* (consciousness or discernment). He taught his disciples that whatever is impermanent (i.e., the *skandhas*) cannot yield lasting satisfaction and therefore does not qualify to be considered as “I,” “mine,” or “my self.”⁶⁵ To attribute the sense of being or I-ness to these aggregates, which are inherently impermanent, is ignorance and perpetuates the cycle of *saṃsāra*.

The doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda* “connotes the idea of the “relativity” of all things, and denies all absolutes, either *Atman*, *Brahman*, *prakṛiti*, and so forth, as permanent entities, or *Īśvara* as an absolute God.”⁶⁶

⁶³ Anālayo. *Satipaṭṭhāna*. (Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 2003), 106.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 107.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 103-104.

⁶⁶ Gadjin M. Nagao. *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 64.

The ‘arising of existence,’ which is also the arising of turmoil (the first Noble Truth), comes about through interdependent and reciprocal forces of the factors (*dharmas*).⁶⁷ Discourses on the mechanics of *pratītyasamutpāda* are often described in terms of twelve sequential co-dependent links: ignorance, mental formation, consciousness, name and form, the six senses, contact, feeling, craving, clinging, becoming, birth, old age and death.

In the *Samyutta Nikāya*, which, according to Anālayo, is the oldest of the Buddhist scriptures, the Buddha speaks of the twelve links as dependently originated phenomena, while “*paṭicca samutpāda*” refers to the relation between them, that is, to the principle (when this is that comes to be...)—the twelve links are an exemplification of the principle.⁶⁸ As Anālayo notes, “even without developing the ability to recollect past lives (as in the case of the Buddha) and thereby directly experiencing those factors of the twelve links that supposedly pertain to a past life, one can still personally realize the principle of dependent co-arising.”⁶⁹ Why? The mechanics of *pratītyasamutpāda* can be observed directly in every single moment, in every act of perception. In fact, he continues, “compared to the entire set of twelve links, the basic principle of dependent co-arising is more easily amenable to direct contemplation.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Frederick J. Streng. *Emptiness*. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), 30.

⁶⁸ Anālayo. *Satipaṭṭhāna*. (Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 2003), 108.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 109.

Pramāṇavada, which is another name for Buddhism, is a doctrine (*vada*) of cognition (*pramāṇa*) for which *pratītyasamutpāda* is the science. The *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta* describes *pratītyasamutpāda* as the “arising” (*uppāda*) of consciousness “in dependence” (*paṭicca*) on sense organ and sense object, with contact being the coming “together” (*saṃ*) of the three.⁷¹ Perception results from the momentary contact between reciprocally adapted subject, object, and means of perception, none of which exist independently of this momentary contact. Buddhādāsa informs us: “the entire series of Dependent Origination operates...in a flash...The...twelve conditions...may all arise, exercise their function and pass away, so fast that we are completely unaware of it.”⁷² The *Nidāna Saṃutta* applies “dependent co-arising to the condition relation between contact and feeling”⁷³ while the *Vibhaṅga* relates dependent co-arising to single mind-moments.⁷⁴

Differentiated perception results from attaching a sense of continuance (i.e., a Self) to each of these individual cognitions. Likened to individual frames of a motion picture, these momentary contacts, when linked with a sense of “I” or “my”, engender a sense of continuation, differentiation, and subsequent suffering. As I will further explore in the chapter on Praxis, by abandoning any notion of a permanent self, the momentary contacts between

⁷¹ Anālayo. *Satipaṭṭhāna*. (Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 2003), 109.

⁷² Ibid., 109.

⁷³ Ibid., 109.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 109.

subject, object, and the means of perception become meaningless and so obtain to the undifferentiated state of *śūnya* (emptiness).

Two types of Buddhist literature expanded upon the doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda*: *Abhidharma* and *Prajñāpāramitā* literature. *Abhidharma* literature focuses on the constituents of *pratītyasamutpāda* causality with discussions on (1) the meaning (*attha*) of words and sentences, (2) analysis of the teaching (*dhamma*), which means analysis of causes, (3) analysis of *nirutti* (grammar and definitions), and (4) analysis of knowing (*prāṭibhāṇa*) from a psycho-epistemological standpoint [and] developed a technique of its own in which the nature of reality and the cause of suffering were analyzed topically.⁷⁵ *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, on the other hand, “rejected the *Abhidharma* concern to define and catalogue the factors (*dharma*s) which constitute existence, and denied that one can attain knowledge of the Ultimate Truth through contemplating how they arise and dissipate.”⁷⁶

While both regarded the “clear apprehension of reality as coincident with spiritual release,”⁷⁷ *Prajñāpāramitā* placed greater emphasis on the actual realization of *Abhidharma* intellection. Whereas *Abhidharma* literature was concerned with knowledge *a priori*, *Prajñāpāramitā* literature was concerned with knowledge *a posteriori*, seeking actual understanding,

⁷⁵ Frederick J. Streng. *Emptiness*. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), 31.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

not mere intellection. *Prajñāpāramitā* literature emphasized the “perfection of wisdom whereby one understood how phenomena arise, the interdependent nature of all factors of existence, and the release from fabricated attachment that was achieved as understanding deepened.”⁷⁸ According to the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the release from fabricated attachments lead to the understanding that everything is, in fact, *śūnya* (empty).

Prajñāpāramitā doctrine “expresses the highest religious aim as the all-encompassing knowledge for the benefit of all beings, a knowledge which clearly perceives that there is no knowledge as such, no bodhisattva, no path for attainment, or no being who *has* knowledge, or who *is* the bodhisattva, or who *proceeds* on the path.”⁷⁹ Streng notes:

The *Prajñāpāramitā* rejects the method of “reviewing” the elements of existence (*dharma*s). In contrast to the *abhidharma* theories of “origination” and “cessation” of elements, the *Prajñāpāramitā* held that there was “non-production” of elements. Instead of regarding the nature of reality to consist of a multiplicity of elements, the *Prajñāpāramitā* held that the apparent multiplicity was simply the product of imagination.⁸⁰

The *Prajñāpāramitā*’s notion of emptiness was read back into the *Abhidharma dharma*’s (differentiated constituents of existence), rendering them all empty. In so doing, *Prajñāpāramitā* literature radically altered the original meaning of dependent co-origination. In them this doctrine represented *an-utpāda* (non-origination) because the phenomenal reality and

⁷⁸ Frederick J. Streng. *Emptiness*. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), 30.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 34.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 34.

the process of its origination are empty.⁸¹ The new definition of “dependent co-origination” is summarized in the *Dedication of the Kārikās*, which maintains that nothing disappears or appears; nothing has an end or is eternal; there is no monistic self-identity nor differentiation; and there is no coming or going.⁸² In sum, no-thing is substantial. This notion of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), which, according to Nāgārjuna, was “the very subjectivity of the Buddha from which emerged the silence with respect to [Vaccagotta’s] questions,”⁸³ formed the basis of his Madhyamic philosophy:

“Well, now, good Gotama, is there a Self?” The Blessed One remained silent. “Well, then, good Gotama, is there not a Self?” Once again, the Blessed One remained silent, and the wandering ascetic Vaccagotta got up and went away.”⁸⁴

James Fredericks argues that the Buddha’s lack of response was “a calculated silence about a metaphysical conundrum, an indeterminate question that, moreover does not tend to edification.”⁸⁵ Likewise, Dr. Tetsuro Watsuji says that the Buddha “refrained from answering [the questions] simply because they were not true philosophical problems.”⁸⁶ According to the *Samyutta-Nikaya*, the Buddha proclaimed that he knew much more than he revealed and that he remained silent for the benefit of his disciples:

And why, monks, have I not revealed them? Because they are not concerned with profit, they are not rudiments of the holy life, they conduce not to revulsion, to

⁸¹ Frederick J. Streng. *Emptiness*. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), 67.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 67.

⁸³ Gadjin M. Nagao. *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 41.

⁸⁴ James L. Fredericks. *Buddhists and Christians*. (New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 32.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁸⁶ Gadjin M. Nagao. *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 39.

dispassion, to cessation, to tranquility, to full comprehension, to the perfect wisdom, to *Nubbana* [*nirvāṇa*]. That is why I have not revealed them.⁸⁷

The Buddha's silence is a testimony to his singular concern for achieving *nirvāṇa* and any notion of self, whether existent or non-existent, was a hindrance to its realization. Nāgārjuna observed that while "there is the teaching of "individual self" (*Atma*) and the teaching of non-individual self (*anātma*)...neither "individual self" nor "non-individual self" whatever has been taught by the Buddhas. (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Xviii. 6)⁸⁸ To speak of the self, whether for or against, is to posit a self to either prove or disprove. In either case, the notion of self remains in play and therefore, remains an obstacle. The issue was not whether or not a self exists, but rather the direct realization of *nirvāṇa*.

As Streng notes, "The real problem was to overcome the illusion that there was an eternal, unchangeable, static reality either in the visible or ideal areas of experience; it is the fabrication of a being-in-itself (*svabhāva*) which was always coextensive with the desire for, or grasping after, such an entity—that was a perversion of "indifferent becoming."⁸⁹ Nāgārjuna, like the Buddha, was concerned with overcoming *saṃsāra*, which he believed to be the result of attaching a sense of self to the cognitive flux produced by *pratītyasamutpāda*.

⁸⁷ James L. Fredericks. *Buddhists and Christians*, 35. Originally in Takeuchi Yoshinori, *The Heart of Buddhism* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 6; Samyutta Nikaya, part 5, trans. F.L. Woodward. London: Pali Text Society, 1979, 370)

⁸⁸ Frederick J. Streng. *Emptiness*. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), 48.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 38.

In his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, Nāgārjuna states: “When ‘I’ and “mine’ have stopped, then also there is not an outside nor an inner self. The taking on [of elements] (*upādāna*) is stopped; on account of that destruction, there is destruction of very existence.” (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, xviii, 4)⁹⁰ As Streng notes, “there is simply the “becoming” of visible and ideal things in dependence on other things which form complexes of attachments or are dissipated in non-attachment.”⁹¹ “Certainly,” Nāgārjuna concludes, “there is no self-existence (*svabhāva*) of existing things in conditioning causes etc.; And if no self-existence exists, neither does “other-existence” (*parabhāva*).” (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* I.3)⁹² For Nāgārjuna, emptiness has, is, and will always be the actual ontological condition of all things.

Mādhyamika Buddhism proposes the existence of two co-extensive truths: (1) *saṃvṛti-satya* or common sense, ethical judgment, and scientific knowledge, all of which are based on conceptual distinction and are constructed verbally and (2) *paramārtha-satya* or ultimate truth, which is *śūnyatā*, Emptiness completely free from conceptual distinction and beyond verbal expression.⁹³ *Saṃvṛti-satya* and *paramārtha-satya* are fundamentally different from one another insofar as conventional truth, no matter how extensive, can never obtain to ultimate truth. Abe Masao says: “Only when

⁹⁰ Frederick J. Streng. *Emptiness*. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), 145-46.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 18.

⁹³ Masao Abe. *Buddhism and Interfaith Dialogue* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 200.

conventional truth is realized as ignorance and thereby completely turned over does ultimate truth emerge.”⁹⁴

Once *paramārtha-satya* is recognized, one comes to realize that a) “the conventional and the ultimate are co-extensive; both pervade the entire world” and b) “Emptiness not only negates conventional truth but also brings it to fruition.”⁹⁵ We find here a causal relation between *saṃvṛti* and *paramārtha*, insofar as the ultimate, i.e., emptiness, has the capacity and tendency for manifesting as the conventional. For Nāgārjuna, although *paramārtha* transcends *vyavahāra* (i.e., conventional truth) and is “silent,” it has no other means by which to reveal itself than by worldly conventional expressions.⁹⁶ Conventional truth, which is no other than the by-product of *pratītyasamutpāda*, is, according to Nāgārjuna, synonymous with the ultimate truth, or emptiness. It was Nāgārjuna who made explicit the notion of emptiness implied in ‘dependent co-origination’ and preached the way to enlightenment by awakening to the emptiness of things in this world.⁹⁷ The duality inherent in conventional wisdom is simultaneously produced *and* transcended by the non-dual nature of the ultimate, i.e., emptiness. Abe notes:

⁹⁴ Masao Abe. *Buddhism and Interfaith Dialogue* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 200.

⁹⁵ Masao Abe. *Buddhism and Interfaith Dialogue* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 200.

⁹⁶ Gadgin M. Nagao. *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 46.

⁹⁷ Masao Abe. *Buddhism and Interfaith Dialogue* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 198.

In his identification of *pratītyasamutpāda*, Nāgārjuna, indicating that dependence co-origination is Emptiness, refers to “dependent co-origination in *saṃsāra*’ in which all dualism or conceptual distinction must be dissolved into emptiness. On the other hand by indicating that Emptiness is dependent co-origination he signifies ‘dependent co-origination in *nirvāṇa*’ in which all dualism or conceptual distinction is reconstructed in the realization of Emptiness without any possibility of clinging to distinction. These negative and positive meanings of Emptiness are implied when Nāgārjuna discusses *pratītyasamutpāda* as a synonym of *śūnyatā*...by “emptying Emptiness”⁹⁸

For Nāgārjuna, *śūnyatā* remains the fundamental ontological condition of reality as a whole, encompassing both the complex of attachments and its negation. Nāgārjuna’s Mādhyamaka doctrine, which sought to empty even emptiness by the intellectual process of negating words with words, was intended to assist the adept in realizing not only that *saṃsāra* and its *dharma*’s are empty, but emptiness itself is empty, i.e., not capable of being referred to, neither imaginatively nor linguistically. If accused to being hypocritical by his own use of language, Nāgārjuna claimed to “employ the logic which was not his own; that is, he used the logic of “some other.”⁹⁹ Nāgārjuna once said: “One who accepts *śūnyatā* does not present an *pakṣa* (thesis, proposition) as his own,”¹⁰⁰ which may also explain the Buddha’s silence.

According to Nāgārjuna, it is this un-referrable Absolute (i.e., emptiness) that enables the production of distinct referents. Nāgārjuna, in order to impress his pupils with the absolute immanence of emptiness, went

⁹⁸ Masao Abe. *Buddhism and Interfaith Dialogue* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 199.

⁹⁹ Gadjin M. Nagao. *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 47.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

so far as to claim emptiness as the ontological basis, cause, and presiding condition of differentiated experience itself. For Nāgārjuna, the differentiated activity of the world is possible only if the universe is fundamentally *śūnyatā*, i.e., empty: As Nagao notes, “it is inconceivable that an activity takes place in a substantive being, for a substantive being is understood to be an eternal, immutable being, and, therefore, could not be active and undergo change. Only when there is no substantiality, that is, when *śūnyatā* is, can there be change and activity.”¹⁰¹ Indeed, change must be accounted for and Nāgārjuna rightly considers a permanent, substantively fixed being (either *svabhāva* or *parabhāva*) to be utterly incompatible with the processes of becoming.

Nāgārjuna’s conception of the Absolute was logical: the Absolute, by definition, must not only encompass everything, but also enable the fruition of particularity, of distinction. As such, the dynamic nature of becoming must be compatible with and attributable to the very nature of the Absolute from whence all change must arise. Kashmir Shaivism wholly agrees with Nāgārjuna’s understanding of the all-pervasive and accommodating vacuity of the Absolute. The point of departure, however, lies in the definition of the Absolute. The *Spanda Kārika* states:

If it is said that *śūnya* or void is like this as stated by Nāgārjuna in the following lines:

“That which is devoid of all supports (whether external or internal), that which is devoid of all *tattvas* (constitutive principles), that which is devoid of the residual

¹⁰¹ Gadgin M. Nagao. *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 43.

traces of all the *kleśas*, that is *śunya* or void. In the highest sense, it is not *śunya* or void as such,” then our reply is, “True, if the absolutely free and ultimate state consisting of Consciousness-bliss be admitted as the substratum (of all), as has been described in *Vijñānabhairava*, that contemplation of the void should be made by making the divine, supreme reality of consciousness as the substratum...otherwise, the statement, “there is no void as such” would be devoid of all sense. (SK I. 12 and 13 Commentary)¹⁰²

Nāgārjuna fails to acknowledge the absolute necessity of a permanent self in order for change (i.e., impermanence) and differentiated perception to occur at all. As the author of the above-mentioned quote observes, even the experience of *śunya* necessitates an experient:

How can that universal extinction be conceived or contemplated where the conceiver or contemplator himself disappears? ...that state (i.e., the state of insentience) being experienced only declares the existence of the experience, the knower who had that experience, not non-existence or void. In the state of so-called universal negation, the undivided state of *cit* or consciousness that is the knower decidedly abides. It is never possible to speak of its non-existence. (SK I. 12 and 13 Commentary)¹⁰³

Bhatta Rāmakaṇṭha (c. 950-1000 C.E.), a Shaivite, in his refutation of the Buddhist conception of *anātma*, exclaims: “In the meditation on the void, since there is the absence of objectivity, to conclude, on account of the cessation of the activities of the instruments (inner and outer) that there is the cessation of the Self is sheer delusion.”¹⁰⁴

Kashmir Shaivism

In order to understand Kashmir Shaivism’s argument for and conception of Self, we must examine Sāṃkhyavada, regarded as India’s oldest

¹⁰² Jaideva Singh, *Spanda Kārikās—The Divine Creative Pulsation*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), 74.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 73-74.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 85.

philosophical system, which provides the most widely accepted ontology of spirit and matter. Advaita Vedānta and Jainism, both of which have adopted elements from Sāṃkhya's cosmology, will also be examined in order clarify Kashmir Shaivism's theological position. Sāṃkhya posits the existence of twenty-five *tattva's* (elements)¹⁰⁵ from *puruṣa* (the conscious spirit) to *prithvī* (the element of earth). Kashmir Shaivism proclaims the existence of an additional eleven *tattva's*, all of which are listed below:

Śuddha tattvas – Pure Elements

Śiva = I-ness (Being)
Śakti = I-ness (Energy of Being)
Sadāśiva = I-ness in This-ness
Īśvara = This-ness in I-ness
Śuddhavidya = I-ness in I-ness / This-ness in This-ness

Ṣaṭ kañcukas – Six Coverings

Māya = illusion of individuality
Kalā = limitation of creativity/activity
Vidyā = limitation of knowledge
Rāga = limitation of attachment
Kāla = limitation of time
Niyati = limitation of place

Puruṣa = ego connected with subjectivity
Prakṛiti = nature

Antaḥkaraṇas – Three Internal Organs

Buddhiḥ = intellect
Ahaṃkāra = ego connected with objectivity
Manas = mind

¹⁰⁵ Thatness, principle, reality, the very being of a thing.

Pañca jñānendriyas = Five Organs of Cognition

Śrotra = ear, organ of hearing
Tvak = skin, organ of touching
Cakṣu = eye, organ of seeing
Rasanā = tongue, organ of tasting
Ghrāṇa = nose, organ of smelling

Pañca karmendriyas – Five Organs of Action

Vāk = speech
Pāṇi = hand
Pāda = foot
Pāyu = excretion
Upastha = procreative

Pañca tanmātras – Five Subtle Elements

Śabda = sound
Sparśa = touch
Rūpa = form
Rasa = taste
Gandha = smell

Pañca mahābhūtas – Five Great Elements

Ākāśa = ether
Vāyu = air
Tejas = fire
Jala = water
Pṛithvī = earth

According to Indian thought, reality (and therefore primacy) is attributed only to that which is changeless: *puruṣa* for Sāṃkhya, *Brahman* for Advaita Vedānta. Consequently, the realm of change (i.e., the objective world) is systematically ignored or omitted from the realm of the Real. Kashmir Shaivism, like Nāgārjuna, proclaims that reality must encompass

both being *and* becoming, arguing that the flux of creation (*sṛiṣṭi*), protection (*sthiti*) and destruction (*saṁhāra*)¹⁰⁶ must be held within the Absolute's (i.e., Śiva's) very own nature. Along with the acts of concealing (*tirodhāna*) and revealing (*anugraha*), these comprise Lord Śiva's five great acts.¹⁰⁷ *Spanda* (vibration) is the activity of His *parāmarśa śakti* (energy of being) and is described as 'movement-less movement' or 'stable movement.' That is to say, the processes of universal 'becoming' are held and stabilized within Lord Śiva's 'being.' All that is impermanent (creation) exists within, and not apart from, that which is permanent (God), a notion that Nāgārjuna may be compelled to agree with provided that the term 'God' be exchanged for 'emptiness.' In this manner, Kashmir Shaivism considers Lord Śiva to be changeless insofar as all 'change' occurs within His own body, which is composed of the aforementioned elements (*tattvas*).

Sāṁkhya-Yoga and Jainism posit the existence of innumerable, qualitatively identical, and immutable souls (*puruṣas/jīvas*). It must be argued, however, that multiplicity without distinction is simply not possible. Advaita Vedānta, in dealing with the improbability of a plurality of indistinct *puruṣas*, has justifiably posited a single spirit (*Brahman*) who subsumes every individual soul and as such, the individual is understood to be one with *Brahman*. The monism of Advaita Vedānta is best illustrated by Lord

¹⁰⁶ More accurately, *layaḥ* (absorption).

¹⁰⁷ These acts will be discussed further, with reference to the doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda*.

Kṛiṣṇa's statement in the *Bhagavad Gītā*: "I am not in them, they are in Me." (BG VII:12)¹⁰⁸ This asymmetrical relationship, however, is not recognized in the monism of Kashmir Shaivism. For Kashmir Shaivism, Lord Śiva is just as much the individual as the individual is Lord Śiva; everything is everything (*sarvasarvātmakam*).

Puruṣa, according to Sāṃkhya-Yoga, is devoid of any attributes save for the following: inexpressible, that which sees, isolated, indifferent, inactive spectator, autonomous, without qualities, no intelligence (because it is desireless).¹⁰⁹ Advaita Vedānta ascribes these same attributes to *Brahman*. Jainism proclaims that every *puruṣa*, or *jīva*, is the embodiment of pure knowledge, pure perception, pure bliss and pure energy. Along similar lines, the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (IV 3:15) states: "This *puruṣa* is free." How, then, are we to make sense of *puruṣa*'s apparent limitation and entanglement with *prakṛiti*? From what must *puruṣa* gain liberation if indeed, it is already free?

According to Mircea Eliade, "neither the *origin* nor the *cause* of this paradoxical situation [i.e., *puruṣa*'s entanglement with *prakṛiti*] has been the object of a formal discussion in Sāṃkhya-Yoga."¹¹⁰ They do, however, admit that *prakṛiti* exists for the 'sake' of *puruṣa*'s bondage and ultimately for

¹⁰⁸ Winthrop Sargeant, trans. *The Bhagavad Gītā*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 330.

¹⁰⁹ Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 15.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

his/her liberation. Advaita Vedānta, unable to find any logical relationship between spirit and nature, has condemned *prakṛiti* to the status of mere illusion (*māyā*) while positing a single immaterial spirit (i.e., *Brahman*) as the only real existent. Kashmir Shaivism, like Nāgārjuna, refuses to accept these inherently dualistic cosmologies on the basis of its incompatibility with the necessary, all-encompassing scope of the Absolute. Consequently, their respective conceptions of the Absolute do not tolerate any sense of duality, which Sāṃkhya, Jainism, and Advaita Vedānta take for granted.

Advaita Vedānta defines *Brahman* as *sat* (absolute existence), *cit* (absolute consciousness) and *ānanda* (absolute bliss). According to Kashmir Shaivism, Lord Śiva's defining attribute is *svātantrya śakti*, the energy of absolute freedom. As the possessor of unbounded freedom, God must encompass more than mere transcendence as Advaita Vedānta's (viz., Karl Barth's) definition can only provide. Lord Śiva is defined as *anuttara* (Absolute), whose attributes are unparalleled by any other being. Lord Śiva is understood as the possessor of innumerable energies, five of which are held in predominance. Understanding God's existence to be implicit, Kashmir Shaivism leaves aside *sat* (existence) and posits three additional defining qualities alongside the energies of *cit* and *ānanda*: the energies of absolute will (*icchā śakti*), absolute knowledge (*jñāna śakti*) and absolute action (*kriyā śakti*). Whereas Advaita Vedānta's definition relegates God's presence to

mere transcendence, Kashmir Shaivism's additional attributions engender His immanence.

According to Kashmir Shaivism, Lord Śiva is both transcendent (*viśvottīrṇa*) and immanent (*viśmaya*), a condition proper to the term Absolute. The Trika doctrine, which is another name for Kashmir Shaivism, is the exposition of Lord Śiva's three-fold presence: transcendent (*parā*/Śiva), universal (*parāparā*/Śakti), and individual (*aparā*/Nara). Whereas *Brahman*, according to Advaita Vedānta, is the embodiment of the transcendent light of consciousness (*citprakāśa*), the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā* proclaims:

The Divine is termed the great lord (*Maheśvara*) because of His ever-present, immutable self-awareness (*vimarśa*). That self-awareness in its absolute Freedom constitutes Divine (*śuddha*-pure) knowledge and activity.¹¹¹ People know *vimarśa* as the very nature of the light of consciousness (*prakāśa*), otherwise light, even if reflecting things, would be insentient like a crystal.¹¹²

Abhinavagupta, the highly revered tenth-century Kashmiri Shaiva philosopher-saint, praises Lord Śiva as the treasure of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, whose glory is the entire objective world. *Prakāśa* is the self-luminous nature of God consciousness and *vimarśa* (= *svātantrya śakti*, *spanda*), His absolute and independent energy of self-awareness.¹¹³ Lord Śiva (i.e., *Brahman*) is the embodiment of consciousness (*caitanyam ātma*)¹¹⁴ and is simultaneously aware of His own nature. The universe, which is the manifestation of Lord

¹¹¹ Jaideva Singh, *Spanda Kārikās—The Divine Creative Pulsation*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), xvii.

¹¹² Ibid., 47.

¹¹³ According to Kashmir Shaivism, absolute freedom (*svātantrya*) confers the capacity to remain completely and continuously aware of oneself.

¹¹⁴ Siva Sutras, 1:1

Śiva's absolute knowledge and activity (viz., *svātantrya śakti*), is His body, His *śakti*, His energetic expression of Himself, in Himself, by Himself, to Himself. As such, the objective world is considered to be the glory of Lord Śiva. According to Kashmir Shaivism, the One *is* the Many; Lord Śiva is quite literally *the* individual who is simultaneously transcendent, universal, and atomic. Lord Śiva is *the* actor who plays the role of each and every sentient and insentient being in this universe.

Contrary to the proclamations of Advaita Vedānta, who consider the objective world to be altogether illusory (*māyā*), Swami Lakshmanjoo tells us:

Kashmir Shaivism argues that if Lord Śiva is real, then how could an unreal substance come out from something that is real? If Lord Śiva is real, then His creation is also real. Why should it be said that Lord Śiva is real and his creation is an illusion (*māyā*)? Kashmir Shaivism explains that the existence of this universe is just as real as the existence of Lord Śiva. As such, it is true, real, pure, and solid. There is nothing at all about it which is unreal.¹¹⁵

In the first chapter of his *Tantrāloka*, Abhinavagupta exclaims:

O objective world! You are so great. By force you enter in the hearts of philosophers and make them dance. Your true nature of objectivity you conceal and make them dance; you joyfully play with them. And those philosophers who perceive and take for granted that 'you O objective world are *jaḍa* (inert), that you are not *caitanya*, that you are not one with God consciousness,' [in actuality] they are *jaḍa* themselves...in fact they are [more] degraded than *jaḍa*.¹¹⁶

Like Kashmir Shaivism, Sāṃkhya-Yoga and Jainism affirm the reality of *prakṛiti* (material nature). Unlike Kashmir Shaivism, however, they hold

¹¹⁵ John Hughes, ed., *Kashmir Shaivism: The Secret Supreme* (Los Angeles: Kashmir Shaivism Fellowship, 2000), 104.

¹¹⁶ Swami Lakshmanjoo, original audio recording *Tantrāloka* 1:331 commentary; Universal Shaiva Fellowship archive.

that *prakṛiti* and *puruṣa* are completely autonomous entities as Christopher Chapple notes:

Puruṣa and *prakṛiti* must in no way be equated or related; the mistaken notion that they are somehow related is the root of all pain [according to Sāṃkhya-Yoga]. The key to knowledge lies in seeing the difference.¹¹⁷

Similarly, *Brahman*, according to Advaita Vedānta, is an inactive spectator who has no real connection to the material world. Thus, for Sāṃkhya, Jainism, and Advaita Vedānta, *puruṣa* does not have a function in the processes of manifestation; *prakṛiti* is the sole proprietor of the universe. Sāṃkhya further proclaims that “psychomental experience does not belong to Spirit (*puruṣa*), it belongs to nature (*prakṛiti*); states of consciousness are refined products of the same substance that is at the base of the physical world and the world of life.”¹¹⁸ Sāṃkhya, therefore, posits ‘upward causality,’ i.e., states of consciousness as the effect of matter. Kashmir Shaivism, on the other hand, argues for a ‘downward causality,’ i.e., matter as the effect of the states of consciousness. The *Īśvarapratyabhijñā* states:

It is not in the power of the insentient to bring forth anything into existence whether it is considered to be already existent in the cause or not existent in it. Therefore, the causal relation is really the relation between the doer or creator and the deed or the object of creation.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Chapple, Christopher, *Yoga and the Luminous* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2008).

¹¹⁸ Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 15.

¹¹⁹ Jaideva Singh, *Spanda Kārikās—The Divine Creative Pulsation*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), 82.

Kashmir Shaivism describes the relationship of spirit and matter in terms of *karta* (doer) and *karma* (deed).¹²⁰ Lord Śiva (i.e., God consciousness) is the conductor of all causes and effects that occur within creation because all corporeal existents are by their very nature *asvātantrya* (dependent) and therefore *jaḍa* (inert). Inertness and dependence are qualities of that which cannot prove its own existence without the support of consciousness. Every element from *śakti tattva* to *pṛithvi tattva* is dependent upon *Śiva tattva*, whose light of consciousness (*prakāśa*) is the necessary grounding of every existent and therefore constitutes the very fabric of their existence. In his *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*, Utpaladeva states: “The object that is made manifest is of the nature of the light of consciousness.”¹²¹ As such, spirit and matter are one.

Swami Lakshmanjoo tells us that *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti* are, in fact, the limited reflections of Śiva and Śakti. As fire is inseparable from its heat, so too is God consciousness (Śiva) inseparable from His energy (*svātantrya śakti*). Likewise, *puruṣa* is forever embraced with *prakṛiti*. By extension, *puruṣa* is considered to be an actor (*karta*) rather than *prakṛiti* as Sāṃkhya-Yoga holds. If stricken of consciousness, *prakṛiti* is absolutely lifeless. As

¹²⁰ Swami Lakshmanjoo, original audio recording TĀ 9:10, commentary; Universal Shaiva Fellowship archive.

¹²¹ Jaideva Singh, *Spanda Kārikās—The Divine Creative Pulsation*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), 47.

Utpaladeva says: “What is not light cannot be said to exist.”¹²² Kashmir Shaivism admits that *puruṣa* is *paṅgu* (without limbs), however, it is the light of consciousness (*prakāśa*) that illuminates what would otherwise be an utterly dark, unintelligible, and therefore nonexistent universe.

According to Sāṃkhya, the intellect (*buddhi*) comprehends the universe by simultaneously reflecting consciousness (*puruṣa*) and material nature (*prakṛiti*). Notwithstanding *buddhi*’s said function, Kashmir Shaivism observes that *buddhi*, being a product of *prakṛiti*, is *jaḍa* (inert). Kashmir Shaivism continually stresses the fact that knowledge cannot be an attribute of that which is independently unconscious. Swami Lakshmanjoo tells us that *buddhi*, which is inherently inert, does not possess the force to distinguish between *sukha* (pleasure), *duḥkha* (pain) and *moha* (illusion). Rather, the capacity to distinguish knowledge lies in the field of consciousness. Kashmir Shaivism argues that *buddhi* can only provide a mere reflection, as is the case with an ordinary mirror, and does not possess the capacity for cognizing the reflection. Our experience tells us that the objective world is much more than a mere intangible reflection and we must, therefore, discover why and how this is so. Swami Lakshmanjoo says:

Reflection in intellect is unreal, it is just like a reflection in the mirror. But reflection in God consciousness is real; we are all reflected in God consciousness, so we are real. When a thing is reflected in God consciousness, it is not reflected only in formation, it is reflected in *śabda*, *spṛśa*, *rūpa*, *rasa* [and *gandha*]...you can touch it, you can

¹²² Jaideva Singh, *Spanda Kārikās—The Divine Creative Pulsation*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), 47.

smell it. This is the difference between reflection in God consciousness and reflection in [an] ordinary mirror.¹²³

According to Kashmir Shaivism, the universe is not ‘created’ – it is a ‘reflection.’ If the universe were created it would necessarily exist apart from its creator as a potter exists separately from a pot. To posit a substance (i.e., the universe) existing apart from its creator is to present a dualistic ontology, which inherently undermines the presence of the Absolute. This being the case, we must then ask: if the universe were a reflection, would it not be separate from that which is reflected? For this, Swami Lakshmanjoo says:

In consciousness, however, you see only the reflected thing and not anything that is reflected. That which is reflected (*bimba*) is in fact *svātantrya*. This whole universe is the reflection in God consciousness of *svātantrya*. There is no additional class of similar objects existing outside of this world that He reflects in His nature. The outside element, that which is reflected, is only [His] *svātantrya*. The infinite variety which is created is only the expansion of [His] *svātantrya*.¹²⁴

As Lord Śiva and His energy, *svātantrya śakti*, are inseparable, we must conclude that nothing is actually reflected (*bimba*). There is only the reflection (*pratibimba*) of God consciousness upon the mirror of God consciousness; *Svātantrya* is the mirror.¹²⁵ Swami Lakshmanjoo tells us:

The creation of this universe is the outcome of this reflection...This reflection, however, is not like that reflection which take place in an ordinary mirror wherein the mirror is the reflector and that which is reflected in the mirror is external to the mirror. The reflection of the universe, which takes place in Lord Śiva’s own nature, is like the reflection, which takes place in a cup shaped mirror. Here Lord Śiva takes

¹²³ Swami Lakshmanjoo, original audio recording Tantrāloka 9:197 commentary; Universal Shaiva Fellowship archive.

¹²⁴ John Hughes, ed., *Kashmir Shaivism: The Secret Supreme*. (Los Angeles: Kashmir Shaivism Fellowship, 2000), 30.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 31.

the formation of a cup [shaped mirror] and puts another cup [shaped mirror] in front of His nature. And in that second cup, which is inseparable from Him, the reflection of the universe takes place.¹²⁶

If there is only the reflection of God consciousness upon the mirror of God consciousness (i.e., *svātantrya śakti*), how are we to make sense of the differentiated objective world and the experience of subjective limitation and individuality? If one were to perceive everything as a reflection in God consciousness, only God consciousness would be perceived. However, this is not the case. We perceive a differentiated universe teeming with countless unique beings and objects. The existence of the objective world can neither be attributed to the reflection of the intellect, as it can only provide an intangible reflection, nor is it simply the reflection of God consciousness, which would render an absolutely monistic perception.

Like Kashmir Shaivism, Advaita Vedānta has identified *māyā* as the cause of the differentiated universe. Advaita Vedānta, however, has failed to uncover *māyā*'s true nature and have consequently been unable to grant Her a definitive ontological status. The great Kashmiri Shaiva masters, on the other hand, have discovered *māyā* to be an actual element (*tattva*) and have been able to intricately describe Her nature and activity. The *Mālinīvijayavārtika* states: "When [Śiva's] power of action reaches its most intense extroversion it becomes *māyā*." (MVV 1.173c-174b)¹²⁷ Lord Śiva, who

¹²⁶ John Hughes, ed., *Kashmir Shaivism: The Secret Supreme*. (Los Angeles: Kashmir Shaivism Fellowship, 2000), 15.

¹²⁷ Sanderson, Alexis. "The Doctrine of the Mālinīvijayottaratantra" in *Ritual and*

is eternally embraced with His consort, *svātantrya śakti* (His own nature), is continually at the climax of bliss (*ānanda*); *māyā* represents the ‘overflowing’ (viz., ‘intense extroversion’) of His bliss. According to Kashmir Shaivism, *māyā* is not separate from Śiva, for She is the very fabric and expression of His *svātantrya śakti*, the difference of which Swami Lakshmanjoo explains:

...*svātantrya śakti* is that state of energy which can produce the power of going down and coming up again, both at will, whereas *māyā* will only give you the strength of going down and not the ability of rising up again; *māyā śakti* is that universal energy which is owned by the individual being, the individual soul. And when that same universal energy is owned by the universal being, it is called *svātantrya śakti*.¹²⁸

In his *Tantrāloka*, Abhinavagupta describes three stages of *māyā*’s flow: *māyā śakti*, *māyā granthi* and *māyā tattva*, each of which are accompanied by three impurities (*mala*’s): *āṇavamala*, *māyīyamala* and *kārmamala* respectively. *Māyā śakti* produces the first and subtlest impurity, *āṇavamala*, the effect of which Swami Lakshmanjoo explains:

Energy of *māyā* is that illusive energy of Lord Śiva where you don’t find any distinction between the illusive energy of Lord Śiva and *svātantrya śakti*; when you cannot differentiate God consciousness and individual consciousness (*bheda avabhāsa*); you feel that this whole universe is one with God consciousness, but you don’t feel it exactly...you are gone, you are away from God consciousness, and you feel that still you are in God consciousness, that is *māyā śakti*; you are in ignorance [but] you don’t feel that you are ignorant; misunderstanding begins from *māyā śakti*.¹²⁹

There are two phases of *āṇavamala*: *lolikā* and *rāga*. *Lolikā āṇavamala* creates the feeling of a general (*sāmānya*), unspecific, and all-

Speculation in Early Tantrism. Studies in Honor of Andre Padoux, ed. T. Goudriaan (Albany: State University of New York Press 1992), 289.

¹²⁸ John Hughes, ed., *Kashmir Shaivism: The Secret Supreme* (Los Angeles: Kashmir Shaivism Fellowship, 2000), 47.

¹²⁹ Swami Lakshmanjoo, original audio recording TĀ 9:149-152 commentary; Universal Shaiva Fellowship archive.

round subtle deficiency in Lord Śiva's being as described above. *Rāga āṇavamala*, which begins to take precedence in the remaining phases of *māyā*'s flow described below, creates the feeling of particular (*viśeṣa*) deficiencies and corresponding desires. Alongside *māyā granthi* (literally: 'illusive knot') arises the second impurity, *māyīyamala*, which produces in Lord Śiva the tendency for possessing differentiated attributions and conceptions in relation to one's self (e.g., 'this is mine,' 'that is not mine,' etc.). At this stage, Lord Śiva begins to actually feel ignorant of His own nature. *Māyā tattva* produces *kārmamala*, the third impurity, producing the tendency for and appropriation of differentiated activity (e.g., 'I do this,' 'I don't do that,' etc.).¹³⁰ At this stage, Lord Śiva is engrossed by all three *mala*'s and is *asvātantrya*, without the power of absolute freedom, completely unconscious (*śūnyatā*), and rendered utterly incomplete (*apūrṇatā*).¹³¹ The *Spanda Kārikā* states:

When, by your own freedom, your own free will, you become worthless, powerless, incapable of anything, then desire rises in you for doing this and doing that. (*Spanda Kārikā* 1.9)¹³²

From *māyā tattva* emerge the five *kañcukas* (coverings), which serve to pacify Lord Śiva with encumbered versions of His universal attributes.¹³³ The

¹³⁰ For a more thorough description of the *mala*'s, please see *Kashmir Shaivism: The Secret Supreme*, 47-50.

¹³¹ Lord Śiva consciousness remains transcendent to and unsullied by this self-inflicted process of limitation.

¹³² John Hughes, ed., *Shiva Sutras: The Supreme Awakening*. (Los Angeles: Kashmir Shaivism Fellowship, 2000), 23.

¹³³ Omnipotent (*sarvakartṛtva*), omniscient (*sarvajñatva*), full/perfect (*pūrṇatva*), eternal

first covering is *kalā tattva*, the limited power of creativity, which awakens Lord Śiva with limited consciousness. Swami Lakshmanjoo tells us that *kalā tattva* is the creator and basis of the differentiated universe, out of which every element from *vidyā tattva*¹³⁴ to *pṛithvī tattva* issue forth in a simultaneous-successive manner.¹³⁵ According to Abhinavagupta, if it was not for the simultaneous-successive infusion of limitation, *māyā śakti* would instantaneously revert back to *svātantrya śakti* and God consciousness would again prevail.

The mirror of God consciousness (*svātantrya śakti*), which would otherwise provide a purely monistic reflection, is veiled by *māyā*, the *malas*, the *kañcukas*, and the remainder of the elementary world, through which Lord Śiva's *māyā śakti* issues forth reflections of countless unique souls (*puruṣas*) possessed of particular natures (*prakṛitis*). Constitutive of *prakṛiti* are the *guṇas*, of which Swami Lakshmanjoo says:

[*Prakṛiti*] is the field where the three tendencies arise and flow forth. These three tendencies are known as the three *guṇas*, the three qualities. They are, respectively *sāttva*, *rājas*, and *tāmas*. *Prakṛiti* is the combination of these three *guṇas* but without any distinction.¹³⁶

To clarify the nature of the *guṇas*, the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā* tells us:

(*nityatva*), and omnipresent (*vyāpakatva*).

¹³⁴ The names and functions of the remaining *kañcukas*: *Vidyā* means having limited knowledge. *Rāga* means a passion for attachment to everything. *Niyati* means attachment for a particular object. *Kāla* means being bound to a particular time, space and form. (*Spanda Nirṇaya* 2.39-41)

¹³⁵ Viz., the movementless-movement of the *Spanda* principle.

¹³⁶ John Hughes, ed., *Kashmir Shaivism: The Secret Supreme* (Los Angeles: Kashmir Shaivism Fellowship, 2000), 6.

What are spoken of as knowledge (*jñāna*) and action (*kriyā*) of the Lord in relation to the objects, which are identical with Him; the same, together with the third, *māyā*, are the three *guṇas* of the limited subject, namely *sāttva*, *rājas*, and *tāmas*.¹³⁷

Abhinavagupta further clarifies in his commentary (*vimarśinī*) of the same:

Consciousness (*prakāśa*) and freedom (*vimarśa* = *svātantrya śakti*) are [Lord Śiva's] powers of knowledge and action respectively. *Māyā* is the Lord's power, which is responsible for the consciousness "I this" (*aham idam*)...these three powers are recognized to be natural, i.e., not-created, in the Lord. But when there is the ignorance of the essential nature of the self and cognition and action refer to objects, which are (recognized to be) separate (from the self)...then arise *sāttva*, *rājas* and *tāmas*, which are characterized by pleasure, pain and absence of both (*moha*).¹³⁸

Puruṣa, equipped with unique tendencies and limited capacities conferred by *māyā*, the *malas*, and the *kañcukas*, agitates the latent *guṇas*.¹³⁹ *Sāttva* (purity or lucidity), *rājas* (passion) and *tāmas* (dullness) arise and fluctuate within *puruṣas* nature (*prakṛiti*), through which the *antaḥkaraṇas* (internal organs) arise: *buddhi* (intellect), *manas* (mind), and *ahaṁkāra* (ego).¹⁴⁰ The *antaḥkaraṇas*¹⁴¹ are the platform upon which the fluctuating *guṇas* are cognized by way of the *jñānendriyas* (five organs of cognition) and subsequently acted upon through the *karmendriyas* (five organs of action), thus conferring uniquely differentiated cognitive and objective experiences to each individual *puruṣa*. The three *antaḥkaraṇas* together with the five

¹³⁷ K.C. Pandey, trans., *Doctrine of Divine Recognition* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986), 221.

¹³⁸ *ibid.*, 221.

¹³⁹ Also attributed to the agitations of Śrikanṭhanātha.

¹⁴⁰ *Buddhi*: discriminative mechanism; *Manas*: thought producing mechanism; *Ahaṁkāra*: I-maker—element to which thoughts and actions are attributed. Swami Lakshmanjoo says: "The only difference between *puruṣa* and *ahaṁkāra* is that *puruṣa* is connected with subjectivity and *ahaṁkāra* is connected with objectivity." (*The Secret Supreme*, 2000), 7.

¹⁴¹ In the same manner as the production of the *guṇa*'s, Swami Lakshmanjoo says: "[Lord Śiva's] aspects of *jñāna śakti* and *kriyā śakti*, in the inferior state of being, are handled by *buddhi*, *manas* and *ahaṁkāra*." *Jñāna śakti* manifests as *buddhi* and *kriyā śakti* manifests as *manas* and *ahaṁkāra*. P.T.V. CD 340 (19:38).

tanmātras (the ‘abodes’ of the five senses) comprise the *puryaṣṭaka*, which is the vehicle that carries *puruṣa*’s impressions (*saṁskāras*) of differentiated cognitive and objective experiences from birth to birth. As it is said in the *Spanda Kārikās*:

Besieged by *puryaṣṭaka*, which rises from the *tanmātras* and exists in mind, ego, and intellect, he (the bound soul) becomes subservient and undergoes the experiences that arise from it in the form of ideas about certain objects and the pleasure or pain that accrues from them. Owing to the continuance of the *puryaṣṭaka*, he (the bound soul) leads transmigratory existence. (*Spanda Kārikās* 3:17-18)¹⁴²

The aforementioned traditions consider ignorance (*ajñāna*) to be the cause of *puruṣa*’s bondage, by which the soul is entangled in the wheel of repeated births and deaths (*saṁsāra*). The cause of *puruṣa*’s ignorance, however, is at variance within every tradition. According to Sāṁkhya-Yoga and Advaita Vedānta, *puruṣa*’s bondage results from its mistaken identification with *prakṛiti/māyā*. Jainism proclaims that *prakṛiti* (specifically *karmic* matter or ‘karmons’) physically *obscures* the knowledge of the soul, *obscures* the perception element of the soul, *defiles* the bliss element of the soul, and *obstructs* the energy element of the soul.¹⁴³ Consequently, these traditions prescribe the complete separation from *prakṛiti*, be it cognitively (Sāṁkhya-Yoga, Advaita Vedānta) or physically (Jainism).

Kashmir Shaivism denounces these positions, arguing that *māyā* (and therefore *prakṛiti*) is the very expression and representation of God’s nature

¹⁴² Jaideva Singh, *Spanda Kārikās—The Divine Creative Pulsation*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), 167.

¹⁴³ Mardia, K.V. *The Scientific Foundations of Jainism*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1996), 10.

and must not be ignored or omitted, for to do so would be to a) undermine the presence of the Absolute and b) deny *our* very own nature. Swami Lakshmanjoo says:

Bondage is not separate from being, it is combined with being. It is not possible that bondage comes from another source. Bondage is a result of your own freedom, your own free will with which you have bound yourself.¹⁴⁴

According to Advaita Vedānta, Sāṃkhya-Yoga, and Jainism, *puruṣa*'s continued involvement with *prakṛiti*/*māyā* is fashioned and sustained by *karma*. Firstly, Kashmir Shaivism argues that *māyā*'s existence precedes corporeality and is in fact the material cause of *puruṣa*'s limited nature (*prakṛiti*) and its persistence, therefore, remains beyond the scope of *karmic* influence. Secondly, although one must initially achieve the state of *guṇātīta* (i.e., cognitively transcend the fluctuations of the *guṇas*), Kashmir Shaivism recognizes the *malas*, i.e., the tendencies of differentiated perception (*āṇavamala*, *māyīyamala*) and differentiated action (*kārmamala*), whose affections persist well beyond the achievement of *guṇātīta*,¹⁴⁵ to be the actual cause of *saṃsāra*. As it is said in the *Sarvacāra Tantra*:

Because of this ignorance, you are filled with differentiated, not undifferentiated, knowledge and you become bound in the wheel of repeated births and deaths. This happens in innumerable ways.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ John Hughes, ed., *Shiva Sutras: The Supreme Awakening*. (Los Angeles: Kashmir Shaivism Fellowship, 2000), 20.

¹⁴⁵ As will be discussed further, *guṇātīta* is first experienced in the state of *pralayākala*, beyond which exist five additional states of being. Although *kārmamala* has ceased to function at the stage of *pralayākala*, *māyīyamala* and *āṇavamala* continue to persist and therefore continue to confer differentiated experience, however subtle.

¹⁴⁶ John Hughes, ed., *Shiva Sutras: The Supreme Awakening*. (Los Angeles: Kashmir Shaivism Fellowship, 2000), 19.

The *Svacchanda Tantra* explains:

Because of the impurity *āṇavamala*,¹⁴⁷ which is attached with *kalā* (limited action) and *vidyā* (limited knowledge), *caitanya* (independent universal consciousness) is lost. It is absorbed in *rāga* (attachment) and limited by *kāla* (time). It is confined in the bondage of *niyati* (attachment to a particular object). This limitation is strengthened by the limitation of the ego. It is absorbed in the body of *prakṛiti* and ever united with three *guṇas*, *sāttva*, *rājas* and *tāmas*. It is established in the reality of *buddhi* (intellect). This Universal I is limited in individual I. It is limited by the mind, by the organs of knowledge, by the organs of action, by the five *tanmātrās* and finally by the five gross elements.¹⁴⁸

Although it is admitted that *svātantrya śakti* and *māyā śakti* are one, the *malas* (impurities), which are the productions of *māyā*, do not reside in *svātantrya śakti*. Why? Swami Lakshmanjoo says:

What if, for the time being, we were to say that the veil of ignorance exists before you are realized, and that afterwards, when you are realized, [you realize that] it does not exist. Then, if ignorance does not exist after realization, it is the truth that it did not exist at all. Why? Because at the time of realization, the aspirant realizes and knows that ignorance does not exist at all. So that ignorance never exists. Whatever he called ignorance existed, but it was not actually ignorance; it was really non-fullness of knowledge.¹⁴⁹

According to Kashmir Shaivism, Self-realization brings about the understanding that there never was a moment that Lord Śiva (i.e., the Self) did not exist in His fullness; never a moment that Lord Śiva was *actually* ignorant of His own nature. Swami Lakshmanjoo continues:

The evidence that, while being in the state of ignorance, Śiva was already filled with knowledge is found in the fact that, at the moment He realizes His own nature and is filled with knowledge, He has the experience that the state of knowledge was already there. So there was never really any separation. Separation only *seemed* to exist.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ *Māyīyamala* and *kārmamala* reside in *āṇavamala*.

¹⁴⁸ John Hughes, ed., *Shiva Sutras: The Supreme Awakening*. (Los Angeles: Kashmir Shaivism Fellowship, 2000), 24.

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 13.

¹⁵⁰ John Hughes, ed. *Self Realization in Kashmir Shaivism*. (NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 24.

In his *Gītā Saṁgraha*, Abhinavagupta says: “That which is nonexistent will never exist; that which exists will never not exist.”¹⁵¹ If the *malas* were truly substantial, they would always remain so and consequently, they could never be overcome. As it is the case that the *malas* no longer ‘exist’ at the moment of Self-realization, they must be deemed eternally unsubstantial and therefore unreal. They simply cause misunderstanding as in the case of mistakenly perceiving a rope to be a snake. John Hughes explains:

The trick lies in the fact that by Śiva’s play he causes the limited individual (i.e., Himself) to experience this world of diversity as the only reality. Real knowledge exists when the aspirant becomes one with God consciousness, which is the same as attaining perfect Self-knowledge. In possessing real knowledge he knows that the world of differentiation is not actually different from Śiva, the supreme reality.¹⁵²

Swami Lakshmanjoo continues:

In the path of Shaivism, there is nothing that exists or that does not exist that is separated from *citprakāśa*, the conscious self. So how can impurity (*mala*) come between you and the conscious self, creating obstacles and bondage? It cannot. Then what is impurity (*mala*)? Impurity is not dirt, impurity is ignorance.¹⁵³

Every perception necessitates a perceiver (*pramātṛi*), a means of perception (*pramāṇa*), and an object of perception (*prameya*). Sāṁkhya and Jainism recognize the existence of *pramāṇa* (the means of perception) and *prameya* (the objects of perception), both of which are held to be the

¹⁵¹ “...asattāvadasadeva satsvabhāvasyāpi kathamasattāsvabhāvaḥ.” Pandit Lakshman Raina, ed. *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*. (Kashmir, 1933), II:16 commentary, pg. 15.

¹⁵² John Hughes, “Moksha in Kashmir Shaivism,” *Journal of Dharma*, Vol.XX, No. 3 (July-September 1995), 270-286.

¹⁵³ John Hughes, ed., *Shiva Sutras: The Supreme Awakening*. (Los Angeles: Kashmir Shaivism Fellowship, 2000), 19.

productions of *prakṛiti* (material nature). The perceiver (*pramāṭri*), however, must achieve complete isolation (*kaivalya*) from *prakṛiti* and Her wares in order to attain liberation (*mokṣa*). Advaita Vedānta does not recognize the reality of *prakṛiti* and consequently regards the means of perception (*pramāṇa*) and the objects of perception (*prameya*) to be unreal (*māyā*)—only the perceiver (*pramāṭri*), untouched by the illusive manifestations of *prakṛiti*, is real.

Recognizing the existence of all three elements, the Buddhist doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent co-arising) states that every perception results from “the ‘arising’ (*utpāda*) of consciousness (viz., *pramāṭri*) ‘in dependence’ (*pratītya*) on sense organ (viz., *pramāṇa*) and sense object (viz., *prameya*), with contact being the coming ‘together’ (*saṃ*) of the three.”¹⁵⁴ As suffering (*duḥkha*) is held to be the result of this perpetual contact, all three must be extinguished (*nirvāṇa*) and so enter the state of *śūnyā* (void). Kashmir Shaivism also accepts the doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda* as the mechanics of perception. The *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* states: “That (i.e., the universe) is manifold because of the differentiation of reciprocally adapted (*anurūpa*) objects (*grāhya*) and subjects (*grāhaka*).”¹⁵⁵ Kashmir Shaivism, like Buddhism, posits the existence of an undifferentiated state that is the source and life of *pramāṭri*, *pramāṇa*, and *prameya*. Whereas Buddhism considers

¹⁵⁴ Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna—The Direct Path to Realization*. (Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 2007), 109.

¹⁵⁵ Jaideva Singh, *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass 1977), 73.

this undifferentiated state to be one of emptiness (*śūnya*), Kashmir Shaivism considers this state to be a full, compacted, undifferentiated vacuum of subjective consciousness (*pramiti bhava*),¹⁵⁶ what the *Spanda Karika* calls *cidānandaghanasva*, a compacted mass (*ghana*) of consciousness (*cit*) and bliss (*ānanda*), without which differentiated experience itself could not be possible; even the experience of *śūnya* necessitates the presence of an experient.

Swami Lakshmanjoo says, “The self is only a vacuum full of consciousness (*ākāśakalpi*). And within that vacuum, that contraction or limitation, are found the states from *Anāśrita śiva*¹⁵⁷ to limited *jīva* (*sakala*).”¹⁵⁸ Kashmir Shaivism delineates seven classes of *pramāṭri*’s (perceivers) along with reciprocally adapted objects that exist within the vacuum of consciousness. Listed in ascending order from the most contracted (*saṅkoca*) to the most expansive (*vikāsa*), they are: *sakala*, *pralayākala*, *vijñānākala*, *mantra* (*śuddhavidya*), *mantrēśvara* (*īśvara*), *mantra*

¹⁵⁶ There is difference between *pramāṭri bhāva* and *pramiti bhāva*. *Pramāṭri bhāva* is that state of consciousness where objective perception is attached. When that state of *pramāṭri bhāva* is attached with objective perception that is pure state of *pramāṭri bhāva*. When it moves to the state where there is no objective perception, there is no touch of objective perception, it is beyond objective perception, that is *pramiti bhāva*. TA 4:124 (Swami Lakshmanjoo’s commentary)

¹⁵⁷ The experience of *Anāśrita śiva* is just prior to the experience of *Sadāśiva*. Swami Lakshmanjoo tells us: “*Anāśrita śiva* refers to that Śiva who has not [yet] accepted the existence of the universe in His own nature.” Please see “The Theory of the Alphabet (*Māṭrikācakra*)” chapter in *Kashmir Shaivism – The Secret Supreme*.

¹⁵⁸ John Hughes, ed., *Shiva Sutras: The Supreme Awakening*. (Los Angeles: Kashmir Shaivism Fellowship, 2000), 19.

maheśvara (*sadāśiva*), and *Śiva/Śakti*.¹⁵⁹ The reciprocally adapted object of each perceiver is the preceding elementary field, e.g., *sakala*'s reciprocally adapted object is *prakṛiti* and her manifestations; *pralayākala*'s reciprocally adapted object is *sakala*; *viññānākala*'s reciprocally adapted object is *pralayākala*, etc. The chapter on Praxis will further elucidate the characteristics of the seven perceivers.

Lord Śiva's five great acts of creation, preservation, destruction, concealing, and revealing are wielded by every *pramātri* (perceiver), limited only by their respective reciprocally adapted object. As it is said in *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*: "Even in this condition (of the empirical self), he (the individual) does the five *kṛtyas* (deeds) like Him (i.e., like Śiva)."¹⁶⁰ Kṣemaraja explains the nature of these five acts:

When the great Lord whose form is consciousness entering into the sphere of the body, *prāṇa* etc., on the occasion of the attention becoming external, makes objects like blue etc. appear in definite space, time etc. then with reference to appearance in definite space, time etc., it is His act of emanation (*sraṣṭṛtā*). With reference to the appearance of the objects in another space, time etc., it is His act of withdrawal or absorption (*saṁharṭṛtā*). With reference to the actual (continuity of the) appearance of blue etc., it is His act of maintenance (*sthāpakatā*). With reference to its appearance as different (from other objects), it is His act of concealment (*vilayakāritā*). With reference to the appearance of everything as identical with the light (of consciousness), it is His act of grace (*anugrahitrā*).¹⁶¹

Every individual routinely performs these five acts whether they are conscious of it or not. The recognition of these acts, which I will explore

¹⁵⁹ See Swami Lakshmanjoo, *Kashmir Shaivism—The Secret Supreme*, Chapters 8-9; pp.51-63, for the full exposition of the seven *pramātri*'s as well as the fifteen-fold science of rising.

¹⁶⁰ Jaideva Singh, *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass 1977), 73. Sutra 10.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 74-75.

further in the chapter on Praxis, reveals the inherent oneness of Lord Śiva and the individual. Such is the symmetry of Kashmir Shaivism's monism.

Both Buddhism and Kashmir Shaivism consider the One (i.e., the Absolute) and the Many (the world of distinction) to be one and the same. The issue, as T.R.V. Murti notes, is a matter of our cognizance of this reality:

There is only change in our outlook, not in reality....The function of *prajñā* [wisdom] is not to transform the real, but only to create a change in our attitude towards it. The change is epistemic (subjective), not ontological (objective). The real is as it has ever been.¹⁶²

Murti, speaking from a Hindu background, implies the presence of a hypokeimenon,¹⁶³ something that Buddhists do not admit. For Buddhists, reality is literally nothing, emptiness, *śūnyatā*. Creation, according to Buddhist thought, is the product of momentary, cognitive flux (*pratītyasamutpāda*), which arises on account of the momentary and perpetual contact between subject (consciousness), the means of knowing, and the known (object), each of which do not have an existence independent of this momentary contact. Further, the flux of cognition are causally unrelated to preceding and succeeding fluctuations, yet somehow manage to impress the experient, who is also a momentary manifestation of *pratītyasamutpāda*, with a false sense of continuance, of a differentiated memory of past, present and future. The problem, according to Kashmir Shaivism, is that even this misunderstanding could not be possible without

¹⁶² Masao Abe. *Buddhism and Interfaith Dialogue* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 197.

¹⁶³ A fixed substratum (e.g., Self or God) that undergoes no change.

the presence of a hypokeimenon. If indeed there is only a stream of flux, each of which are unrelated to prior and post cognitive fluctuations, there could be no reflective experience whatsoever because memory could not be possible; only emptiness would be perceived. This, however, is not the case. The experience of differentiation, i.e., ignorance, must be accounted for.

Nāgārjuna, however, would wholly agree with Murti's analysis. Although vehemently refuting the existence of a permanent self, Nāgārjuna does in fact argue for the presence of a hypokeimenon, albeit an 'empty' one. The *dharma's* (constituents) of *saṃsāra*, according to Kashmir Shaivism and Nāgārjuna, must be composed of the very fabric of the Absolute. The differentiated realm of *māyā*, like *saṃvṛiti-satya*, are considered, upon final analysis, to be non-different from the Absolute. Consequently, the ultimate realization, according to both traditions, reveals that differentiation itself has, is, and always will be identical to the undifferentiated Absolute.

Buddhism's argument against the existence of self is attributable to the unreferrable nature of the Absolute (emptiness). On account of its all-pervasive presence, the Absolute, as it in itself, cannot be objectified and therefore, cannot be perceived. As an oft-quoted Buddhist saying goes, "if you meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha." Similarly, Kashmir Shaivism concedes that the Absolute (Lord Śiva) cannot be perceived, because the perceiver can never become an object of perception just as one cannot step over one's own shadow. *Śūnyāta*, according to Buddhist thought, was believed to be the most

accurate term to describe this state, which, although pervading all things, cannot be said to be a thing as such. Who is it, Kashmir Shaivism asks, that realizes both the difference and non-difference of all things? Kashmir Shaivism argues that *śūnyāta*, which, by its very nature is insentient, cannot yield the experience of differentiation nor undifferentiation, both of which must be co-extensive with the Absolute, nor could it confer the experience of absolute freedom (*svātantrya*), a defining quality that is at the heart of every traditions' conception of the Absolute.

Kashmir Shaivism's argument against Buddhism's conception of the void is the same as their argument against Sāṃkhya's and Advaita Vedānta's conception of *puruṣa* and *Brahman* respectively. The Absolute, according to Kashmir Shaivism, cannot be composed only of insentient light (*prakāśa*) as in the case of Sāṃkhya and Advaita Vedānta, nor insentient void (*śūnyāta*) as in the case of Buddhism. Why? The world is real (i.e., exists) insofar as it is active and activity itself is real insofar as it is known. Universal existence, according to Kashmir Shaivism, is attributable to and enabled only by that which is sentient and sentience implies knowledge and activity. As Abhinavagupta says, "The being of the insentient depends entirely on the sentient; and (the powers of) knowledge and action are the very life of the sentient beings" (*Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśini* I.3).¹⁶⁴ As such, it is the active,

¹⁶⁴ K.C. Pandey, *Doctrine of Divine Recognition*, Vol. III. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986), 14.

independent, and self-aware light of consciousness (*prakaśa* and *vimarśa*), not emptiness or inactive consciousness, that constitutes the very fabric of all knowledge and activity, whether differentiated or undifferentiated, and therefore existence itself. In the *Bhagavad Gīta*, Lord Kṛṣṇa eloquently reveals this ontology to his troubled friend and disciple, Arjuna.

The Bhagavad Gītā

The *Bhagavad Gītā*, the ‘Lord’s Song,’ has long been celebrated in India as the quintessential exposition of liberation (*mokṣa*). Set in the middle of the great battlefield of *Kurukṣetra*, betwixt two opposing armies of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, God incarnate, Lord Kṛṣṇa, discloses the great mysteries of universal existence to the great yet reluctant Pāṇḍava warrior, Arjuna, who is commissioned to achieve liberation by fulfilling his *dharma* (duty) in the midst of a civil war of epic proportions. In facing a nightmarish scenario in which he must slay his own kiths and kin (who, with reference to the *Mahabharata* epic of which the *Bhagavad Gītā* is a single chapter, are decidedly worth killing), Arjuna must understand not only the righteousness inherent in his participation in this war but more importantly the non-dual (*advaita*) nature of Self and creation. However, Arjuna is altogether crippled by the thought of going to war against his own family. Lord Kṛṣṇa prescribes nine *yoga*’s to ease Arjuna’s agony of fulfilling his *dharma*, or duty. Arjuna

must attain union (*yoga*) with the supreme truth in order to gain the emotional wherewithal to fulfill his duty. Lord Kṛṣṇa teaches Arjuna:

Nothing higher than Me exists,
O Arjuna.
On me all this universe is strung
Like pearls on a thread. (BG VII:7)¹⁶⁵

Lord Kṛṣṇa (God) Himself is the thread and the myriad formations of creation are the pearls. This analogy illustrates the co-existence of string and pearl, which is forever united in the garland of being. God (i.e., the thread) is firmly established in the knowledge of the unity of all creatures (pearls) however each pearl in itself is susceptible to remaining ignorant of such unity. Lord Kṛṣṇa continues:

Wrong doers, lowest of men,
Deprived of knowledge by illusion,
Do not seek me,
Attached as they are to a demoniacal
Existence. (BG VII:15)⁵⁷

This ‘demoniacal’ existence proclaimed by Lord Kṛṣṇa can be equated to humanity’s ‘sinful’ existence proclaimed by Christian scholars who consider everything that distracts one from contemplating God to be a ‘demon.’ According to Lord Kṛṣṇa, these ‘demons’ are the *guṇa*’s, the three qualities. Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

All this universe is deluded by these
Three states of being,
Composed of the qualities.
It does not recognize Me,¹⁶⁶
Who am higher than these, and eternal. (BG VII:13)¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Sargeant, Winthrop. *The Bhagavad Gita*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 325.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 331.

The cause of ignorance is *prakṛiti* (material nature). As we have seen, *prakṛiti* is composed of the *guṇas* (qualities) and are of three kinds: *sattva* (luminosity), *rajas* (passion), and *tamas* (dullness), which are originally in a state of balanced equipoise, imbalanced only by the introduction of individuated consciousness (*puruṣa*). Lord Kṛṣṇa goes on to illustrate the influence that each of the *guṇas* has on a person with respect to various activities including one's manner of prayer, alms giving and even eating habits (See BG XVII). The *guṇas* inform the manner in which one feels and subsequently how one behaves, which occurs differently amongst every individual. Consequently, every individual differs in their likes and dislikes and therefore differ in their conceptions of what is good and what is evil. One who is under the influence of these delusions of duality cannot recognize God.

Lord Kṛṣṇa continues:

Divine indeed is this illusion of Mine
Made up of the three qualities,
And difficult to penetrate;
Only those who resort to Me
Transcend this illusion. (BG VII:14)¹⁶⁸

Kṛṣṇa implies that creation in all of its myriad formations are in fact altogether divine, which is the primordial state of *prakṛiti* itself, viz., Eden. However, even within the goodness there exists these obstacles, the *guṇas* or qualities, which can be likened to the fruit of differentiated knowledge. Lord

¹⁶⁷ Sargeant, Winthrop. *The Bhagavad Gita*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 331.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 332.

Kṛṣṇa informs Arjuna that the only way to return to grace is to transcend these ‘qualities’ by ‘resorting to God,’ i.e., by remembering God in the midst of these gunic fluctuations. This state of transcendence is called *guṇatita*: beyond the *guṇas*. Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is depicted as the exemplar of *guṇatita*, implores Arjuna (man) to become like Him. Once these illusory qualities are transcended, creation is recognized to be of the same substance from which it came, i.e., God. How is such transcendence achieved? Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

He whose wisdom is established
Casts off, here in the world, both good
And evil actions;
Therefore devote yourself to yoga!
Yoga is skill in action. (BG II:50)¹⁶⁹

Lord Kṛṣṇa defines wisdom as the casting off any and all conceptions of good and evil. As Adam and Eve were originally both wise in Eden, we can attain that original wisdom by becoming as they/we were: devoid of conceptions of good and evil. Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna: “Your right is to action alone; Never to its fruits at any time.” (BG II:47)¹⁷⁰ Lord Kṛṣṇa continues:

Indeed, the man whom these (i.e., the sensations)
Do not afflict, O Arjuna
The wise one, to whom happiness and unhappiness
Are the same, is ready for immortality. (BG II.15)¹⁷¹

Lord Kṛṣṇa’s above-mentioned formula appears to be a logical reversal of the initial transgression. Through the lens of the *Gītā*, as humanity became mortal on account of consuming the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil,

¹⁶⁹ Sargeant, Winthrop. *The Bhagavad Gita*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 135.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 133.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 100.

the discontinuation of its consumption, which is function of *yoga*, enables humanity to again attain to immortality.

Praxis

Just as in Kashmir Shaivism, the foundational assumption in Christianity, at least according to their mystics, is that “union with God is not something we are trying to acquire; God is already the ground of our being.”¹⁷² Buddhism would concur provided that the term ‘God’ is substituted for ‘*śūnyata*.’ Rather than being a process of acquisition, union with God or *śūnyata* is a matter of recognition, which requires proper contemplation. Unlike Buddhism, however, Christianity and Kashmir Shaivism hold grace to play an essential role in the contemplative’s success in recognizing his/her unity with the Absolute.

Christian Praxis

According to Martin Laird, “there is nothing we can do to bring forth [the flowering of contemplation].”¹⁷³ A contemplatives’ success is dependent upon being ‘possessed’ by God as John Ruysbroek says: “He enters the very marrow of our bones...He swoops upon us like a bird of prey to consume our

¹⁷² Martin Laird, *Into the Silent Land* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 12.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 54.

whole life, that he may change it into His.”¹⁷⁴ This is not to say, however, that the adept has simply to await the Spirit’s descent. While it is true that “there is nothing the gardener can do to make the plants grow...if the gardener does not do what a gardener is supposed to do, the plants are not as likely to flourish.”¹⁷⁵ What, then, is the ‘gardener’ (i.e., the contemplative) supposed to do?

According to Thomas Merton, there is a place within the human person, which he calls *le point vierge*, that is “untouched by illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God;”¹⁷⁶ “a power in the spirit that alone is free.”¹⁷⁷ The discovery of this ‘center’ is the vocation of the contemplative. In order to reveal this interior abode, however, one must struggle to disable the physical and cognitive sheathes that work to conceal it. As Cassian notes, “when someone makes no effort to root them out, how will he be able to arrive at that sense of the virtues...or how will he come to the mysteries of things spiritual heavenly?”¹⁷⁸

For Merton, “to be a contemplative is to be an outlaw; as was Christ, as was Paul.”¹⁷⁹ What does this mean? Jesus promulgated an “ethic, which is to be guided by the twin loci of imitating the boundless love of God for his rebellious children and being strikingly different from the ordinary ‘natural

¹⁷⁴ Martin Laird, *Into the Silent Land* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 15.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁷⁶ Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (New York: Doubleday, 1968), 158.

¹⁷⁷ Edmund Colledge, trans., *Meister Eckhart* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 180.

¹⁷⁸ A.M. Casiday, trans., *Saint John Cassian on Prayer* (Cistercian Publications, 2007), 156.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Merton, *Raids on the Unspeakable* (NY: New Directions, 1966), 14.

law' behavior of others."¹⁸⁰ YHWH had previously instructed the Israelites to 'be holy, for I am holy.'¹⁸¹ In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ again reminds His listeners to 'be perfect as your Father is perfect.' The imitation of God's love was to be practiced and realized in personal and economic matters and was thrust into motion by the wielding of the 'sword' and the subsequent bearing of a 'cross,' which were both conditions for salvation according to Jesus. When great multitudes began following Jesus, he issued them a warning:

Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household. (Lk. 10:34-36)

Christian contemplative practice begins with the severance of worldly ties and commitments. Why? In order that one may be able to focus all their desire and energy in the exertion of spiritual discipline, which requires wholehearted and unwavering attention. There must be a complete removal of all concern for bodily things...even the memory.¹⁸² Even one's sense of 'self' must be abandoned because discipleship under Jesus requires 'hating' even one's own life: "If anyone does not hate father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, Yea, and even his own life, He cannot be

¹⁸⁰ Yoder, John Howard. *The Politics of Jesus*. (Carlisle, UK: The Paternoster Press, 1999), 34.

¹⁸¹ Lev. 19:2.

¹⁸² A.M. Casiday, trans., *Saint John Cassian on Prayer* (Cistercian Publications, 2007), 102.

my disciple.”¹⁸³ In Jesus, “whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for [His] sake will find it.”¹⁸⁴

Jesus modified the Decalogue’s first commandment to “love thy Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength” into His own commandment: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:34). Whereas mankind is implicitly understood to be a reflection of God in the First Testament, the Second Testament explicitly confirms humanity’s divine image in and through the person of Jesus, the Christ. Humankind is now required to properly reflect God’s image through the imitation of Jesus and treat humanity with the dignity of divinity. The ‘lowering’ of God to the human condition through kenosis via the Incarnation indicates a radical shift in the believers’ understanding of humanity’s relationship to God. Through God’s incarnation in Christ, humanity as a whole is now given evidence of its closeness with God, i.e., our person goes beyond mere ‘image.’ The entire human being is [now] meant to respond to his Creator in all the dimensions of his life, in body and in soul.¹⁸⁵

So, what does this have to do with ‘hating’ ones kiths and kin? Loving well entails regarding *everyone* as if they were God “because God does not discriminate, [Jesus’] disciples are called upon likewise not to discriminate in

¹⁸³ Luke 14:25.

¹⁸⁴ Matt, 10:39.

¹⁸⁵ Schockenhoff, Eberhard. *The Universal Claim of Biblical Ethics*. Washington D.C.: (The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 235.

choosing the objects of their love.”¹⁸⁶ The message seems clear: one who loves particularly is unable to love universally. In procreating a sense of universal love, one must begin by ‘severing’ one’s filial and egotistical attachments, which tend to inhibit one’s ability to love a stranger or even an enemy as oneself, as God.

St. Paul reconciled Jesus’ commandment for the severance of one’s filial ties with the reality of one’s societal obligations by stating: “...time is short...those who have wives should live as if they do not; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them.”¹⁸⁷ In recognizing the mutual dependence between society and the survival of mankind, St. Paul asserts the possibility of wielding the ‘sword’ of detachment in the midst of worldly life. In keeping with Christ’s command to “give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s,”¹⁸⁸ St. Paul called for the tolerance of social institutions while inwardly remaining singularly devoted to God. In Paul, the Christian is assured that the journey towards love and freedom is an internal, cognitive endeavor, which requires a certain detachment from perceived societal goods and evils because they tend to inhibit one’s ability to perceive the image of divinity in others. It was not a simple question of the

¹⁸⁶ Yoder, John Howard. *The Politics of Jesus*. (Carlisle, UK: The Paternoster Press, 1999), 117.

¹⁸⁷ 1 Cor. 7:29-31.

¹⁸⁸ Mark 12:17.

religious role of God, but an issue in the social dimension, where the old order—the distinctions of father and child, between master and servant, between the male and the female—had to be destroyed.¹⁸⁹ These distinctions had to be overcome in order to properly serve God through His images. Jesus proclaimed the following to his disciples:

In the world the recognized rulers lord it over their subjects, and their great men make them feel the weight of authority. That is not the way with you; among you, whoever wants to be great must be your servant. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to surrender his life as a ransom for many.¹⁹⁰

Unlike Judaism's scheme of avoidance (viz., the Decalogue) or stillness (viz., Ps. 46:10), Jesus prescribed a scheme of proactive involvement in the world, which entailed selfless service. St. Paul understood "Jesus' one commandment to love as replacing the plurality of commandments in the Torah...the individual commandments are subsumed in love, which thus becomes the true motivation for conduct."¹⁹¹ As the original transgression brought about the death of man, which entailed mankind's inability to serve the will of God, Jesus implored his disciples to resume their service to God by serving His images. Such service, however, requires the shunning of discriminative knowledge.

The high ethical directives of the Bible describe a path for human life, going beyond the minimum definition of the human person, which underlies

¹⁸⁹ Harle, *Ideas of Social Order in the Ancient World*, p. 41.

¹⁹⁰ Matt 20:25-28.

¹⁹¹ Schockenhoff, Eberhard. *The Universal Claim of Biblical Ethics*. Washington D.C.: (The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 250.

both the classical natural law and the modern ethos of human rights, and employing the terms ‘salvation’ and ‘redemption’ to portray the comprehensive success of human life.¹⁹² Success, salvation and redemption, however, are seen only within the scope of the whole of time (viz., salvation history), of which humans cannot know. Through Christ, the believer is given hope of entering the Kingdom upon the coming of the eschaton, which is achieved through fulfilling the task of Christ, i.e., the bearing/sharing of his cross. So, what does it mean to fulfill the task of Christ? The Christian is instructed to love unconditionally in the face of any and all adversity. When harmed or insulted, one is instructed to turn the other cheek, not as a sort of masochistic approach, but rather through the outpouring of love for all of mankind and God. Through Christ, the Christian is witness to the excruciating pain that Christ experienced, his plea to God for the forgiveness of his prosecutors in the midst of unimaginable suffering, and finally his resurrection/redemption resulting from his magnanimous disposition throughout his trials.

Likewise, the believer must actively and creatively display self-sacrificing love in order for an inner self-transformation to occur. The transformation of Jesus occurs in His resurrection, which implies the necessity of death for the attainment of perfection. Consequently, the

¹⁹² Schockenhoff, Eberhard. *The Universal Claim of Biblical Ethics*. Washington D.C.: (The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 226-227.

Christian life involves a constant dying to selfishness and sin to enter more fully into the resurrection, and so death itself can be seen as the moment of growth par excellence—dying to the present to enter most fully into life itself.¹⁹³ According to Antony the hermit, “it is good to carefully consider the Apostle’s statement: ‘I Die Daily.’”¹⁹⁴ Antony clarifies: “as people who anticipate dying each day we shall be free of possessions, and we shall forgive all things to all people.”¹⁹⁵ The goal, as Antony puts it, “is that the body might be subservient to the soul¹⁹⁶; putting off the body, which is corruptible, we receive it back incorruptible.”¹⁹⁷ For St. Paul, this is precisely the function of baptism.

According to Paul, the procurement of righteousness is the most important function of baptism. In Romans 4, Paul invokes the righteousness of Abraham as described in Gen 15.6: “Abraham believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” For Abraham, there was no Judaic Law to be adhered to, for it had not yet been established; his righteousness came by faith alone. Paul considers the unconditional obedience displayed by Abraham as the paradigm to be followed in terms of one’s relationship with God. As the New Jerome Biblical Commentary states, the paradigm of

¹⁹³ Curran, Charles. “Method in Moral Theology: An Overview from an American Perspective.” In *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*. eds. Ronal Hamel and Kenneth R. Himes. (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 95.

¹⁹⁴ Robert C. Gregg, trans., *Athanasius* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1980), 45.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

Abraham was extended to the Jewish tradition on the basis of the universality of ‘all the families of the earth’ (Gen 12:3) to mean that ‘the whole world’ was Abraham’s inheritance.”¹⁹⁸ Paul then goes on to invoke Jesus’ own reason for undergoing baptism from John: “To fulfill all righteousness” (Matt 3:15). A disciple must baptize ‘into Christ’ in order to fulfill the same.

Paul compares what has been accomplished through Christ with the state of humanity beginning with Adam: grace and life compared to sin and death. (For Paul, death is not simply the cessation of life but because it came through sin, the negation of life.)¹⁹⁹ Paul says:

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. (Rom 5:19)

Paul’s thesis runs thus: The story of the righteousness attributed to Abraham was written for us who believe in the Lord Jesus, “who was given over for our transgressions and raised for our justification” (4:25).²⁰⁰ For Paul, Jesus reversed humanity’s original and continued transgression with unparalleled righteousness and obedience to the will of God, which led to the reconstitution of His ‘life’ (viz., the resurrection).

Likewise, the disciple must also strive to reconstitute his/her own life

¹⁹⁸ Brown, Raymond E., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy, eds. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 842.

¹⁹⁹ Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 567.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 567.

by mimicking the righteousness displayed by Jesus, which, according to St. Paul, is heralded by the rite of baptism. Through baptism, one is “baptized into [Jesus’] death and buried with him, so that as he was raised from the dead, we too might walk in the newness of life (Rom 6:14).²⁰¹ Baptism, however, does not necessarily guarantee one the benefit of resurrection, yet functions to ‘prepare’ one for it. As Jesus must have viewed John’s baptism as ‘preparatory,’ the same understanding was to be held by His disciples insofar as the rite was a means of concretizing one’s *desire* to identify with Jesus’ righteousness, which, for Paul, was obtained by Jesus through his death.

If Jesus spoke of his coming death as a baptism (Mk 10.38, Lk 12.50), then it would help explain why Paul spoke of baptism as a means to sharing in that death; expressed the baptisand’s desire to identify himself with Jesus (the one who had successfully endured the messianic woes) in his death.²⁰² It is important to note that Paul links baptism only with the *idea* of death, not with resurrection, which is still future.²⁰³ St. Paul eloquently describes what is required of a Christian disciple:

Let your bearing towards one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus. For the divine nature was his from the first; yet he did not think to snatch at equality with God, but made himself nothing, assuming the nature of a slave. (Phil 2:6)

The kerygma of Paul called for wearing Jesus’ garment (Rom 13:14, Gal

²⁰¹ Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 567.

²⁰² Dunn, James D.G. *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), 158.

²⁰³ Ibid., 158 (My emphasis).

3:27), i.e., playing the part of Jesus. What part did Jesus play? Jesus' declared that he "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matt 20:28) His desire to serve arose out of a preexisting understanding of who he was (i.e., the Son of God). The humility implicit in Jesus' actions is astounding considering that he knew that "the divine nature was his from the first." His 'allowing' of his own death denoted that Jesus sacrificed himself, "made himself nothing (i.e., dead) and "assumed the nature of a slave" *for God, for Man*. Jesus' resultant resurrection proved that he was, in fact, the Son of God, i.e., God-incarnate. In the same way, a Christian "must be prepared to die for Christ because he knows that no one can die for the one who is Life itself [saying to him/herself], 'We are glad to be weak—provided you are strong (2 Cor. 13:9).'"²⁰⁴ As St. Paul attests, "God's power is at its best in [our] weakness" (2 Cor 12:8-9). Invoking Jesus' self-sacrifice, St. Paul instructed his disciples to do the same:

...present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For Paul, the rite of baptism functioned as the sacrificial pyre, which was not confined to any particular ritualistic method. St. Paul accepts a diversity of beliefs about baptism (1:10-16; 15:9)...He does not insist on the sole legitimacy of his own view or of a particular view of baptism...Instead, he

²⁰⁴ A.M. Casiday, trans., *Saint John Cassian on Prayer* (Cistercian Publications, 2007), 112.

plays down the role of baptism; it is kerygma that matters, not baptism.²⁰⁵

The problem, however, is that kerygma, or the content of the church's preaching, is inherently limited to the delivering agency, i.e., the preacher, who is him/herself a mere disciple. Paul was well aware of this shortcoming when he admonished the quarrelling of the disciples: "One of you says, 'I follow Paul'; another, 'I follow Apollos'; another, 'I follow Cephas'; still another, 'I follow Christ.' Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?"²⁰⁶ For Paul, the function of kerygma is to convey Christ, not the delivering agency. Implicit in kerygma, therefore, is that the functionary be completely identified with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus in order to elicit and impress the required religious sentiment from and to the Christian disciple.

Jesus spoke of the Kingdom, not as something attainable in the future, but rather as something 'now at hand.' If this is the case, physical death may not necessarily be required for the attainment of perfection. As Curran indicates, the fullness of life is achieved by 'dying to the present,' the achievement of which would negate the necessity of a 'salvation history' because salvation may be had in this very moment. Ever since the Fall, mankind could no longer love others as themselves. In order to reverse humanity's original and ongoing sin, Jesus and St. Paul prescribed what might be called 'cognitive asceticism.' To love another as oneself requires

²⁰⁵ A.M. Casiday, trans., *Saint John Cassian on Prayer* (Cistercian Publications, 2007), 25.

²⁰⁶ I Cor 1:11-16

more than forced or feigned gestures. The ability to love well must naturally arise from the center of one's very being, what Merton called *le point vierge*, enabling one to naturally and spontaneously abide by the golden rule. It requires an un-artificial purity of mind and soul stricken of all selfish (and therefore sinful) motives. It requires a Spirit and effort driven transformation at the root of the human mind, intellect and heart, which enables one to clearly understand *why* one must love another as oneself. The mental asceticism implicit in this process is also prescribed in Buddhist and Kashmiri Shaiva contemplative practice.

Buddhist Praxis

On the event of his enlightenment, Śakyamuni exclaimed, 'Wonderful, wonderful! How can it be that all sentient beings are endowed with the intrinsic wisdom of the *Tathāgata*?'²⁰⁷ The *Tathāgata*, which literally means "the one thus come, the one thus gone," refers to the very constituents of the *pratītyasutpada* flux, i.e., the subject, object, and means of cognition: they arise and fall, come and go, and are created and destroyed every single moment, thus rendering them empty of any sustained subjective or objective substance. Everything is, in fact, empty, yet this emptiness is dynamic (*Tathāgata*) insofar as it appears as this, now that, now neither.

²⁰⁷ Abe, Masao. *A Study of Dōgen*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 41.

Consequently, Śakyamuni's enlightenment conferred the experience that all of creation appeared to partake in the same realization. How? In 'Bussho' fascicle of his *Shobogenzo*, Dōgen, a twelfth-century Japanese Zen mystic, quotes a sutra from the *Nirvāṇa Sutra* that runs thus:

All sentient beings without exception have the Buddha-nature.
Tathāgata [Buddha] abides forever without change.

Against this traditional reading, however, Dōgen re-read the same passage as follows:

All is sentient being, whole-being (all beings) is the Buddha-nature;
Tathāgata is permanent, nonbeing, being, and change.²⁰⁸

The original reading indicates that the Buddha-nature, and therefore all sentient beings, transcend the world of change. In order to account for Śakyamuni's realization, Dōgen, like Nagārjuna, understood *Tathāgata* (i.e., emptiness) to pervade everything, proclaiming it to be the *actual* state of reality as a whole, be it permanent, nonbeing, being, or change. If it is true that everything is composed of the Buddha-nature, the Buddha-nature itself must contain and exhibit the qualities of everything: as sentient and insentient beings experience change, so too must Buddha-nature undergo change. Consequently, Dōgen proclaims: "nothing throughout the whole universe has ever been concealed."²⁰⁹

The dilemma is the consolidation of the *belief* of an intrinsic Buddha-

²⁰⁸ Abe, Masao. *A Study of Dōgen*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 35.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

nature with the actual *felt* experience of Buddha-hood in and as all things. Dōgen's conception of the Buddha-nature, much like Nagārjuna's formulation of emptiness, "cannot be understood apart from his idea of the oneness of practice and attainment."²¹⁰ Dōgen found it heretical to simply posit either original awakening or acquired awakening as independent aspects in the process of realization. Dōgen waxes practical in stating: "what must be understood is that one must practice *in* realization."²¹¹ As a disclaimer, Dōgen warns that the practice of *zazen* is not to be taken lightly. He says, "you should know that those who like easy things are, as a matter of course, unworthy of the practice of the Way."²¹² The passion required for *zazen* is not something that people naturally possess. For Dōgen, those who care not for the practice of *zazen* 'hate' the Buddha and all that he exemplified.

Like St. Paul, Dōgen was aware of the importance of kerygma, or guidance in the contemplative's success. In his *Points to Watch in Buddhist Training*, Dōgen writes:

The Buddhist trainee can be compared to a fine piece of timber, and a true master to a good carpenter. Even quality wood will not show its fine grain unless it is worked on by a good carpenter. Even a warped piece of wood will, if handled by a good carpenter, soon show the results of good craftsmanship. The truth or falsity of enlightenment depends upon whether or not one has a true master. This should be well understood.²¹³

As he indicates, it matters not the quality of the disciple (i.e., if he/she is like

²¹⁰ Abe, Masao. *A Study of Dōgen*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 65.

²¹¹ Ibid., 66.

²¹² Yokoi, Yuho. *Zen Master Dōgen*. (New York, NY: Weatherhill, 1976), 53.

²¹³ Ibid., 52.

warped or fine timber), but what matters is the skill of the carpenter, i.e., the master, in shaping the disciple. Nonetheless, a disciple must be malleable and capable of retaining the masters' knowledge and instruction.

Conventional Buddhism formerly demanded troublesome practices and the ability of the believer to understand complex esoteric theories, far beyond the grasp of uneducated believers. 'Zazen only,' however, caused a revolutionary change in this situation – the Way became attainable to all.²¹⁴ For Dōgen, everyone is capable of practicing *zazen*. He states, "In Buddhism, neither a brilliant mind nor a scholastic understanding is of primary importance."²¹⁵ What is required above all is faith in the Buddha's promise of the attainability and intrinsic position of the Buddha-nature for without faith, one will not possess the will to begin or even continue with the demanding practice of *zazen*.

On account of the human capacity to attain enlightenment, Dōgen urges us to actualize our potential immediately. In his *Universal Recommendation for Zazen (Fukan Zazengi)*, Dōgen states:

You have already had the good fortune to be born with a precious [human] body, so do not waste your time meaninglessly. Now that you know what is the most important thing in Buddhism [i.e., zazen], how can you be satisfied with the transient world? Our bodies are like dew on grass, and our lives like the flash of lightening, vanishing in a moment.²¹⁶

Dōgen, like St. Paul, understands the foolishness of remaining unaware of

²¹⁴ Takahashi, Masanobu. *The Essence of Dōgen*. (London: Kegan Paul International Ltd, 1983), 3.

²¹⁵ Yokoi, Yuho. *Zen Master Dōgen*. (New York, NY: Weatherhill, 1976), 53.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

the shortage of time and instead wasting our time in the meaningless pursuit of transient worldly concerns, which, for Dōgen, is the highest form of neglect. Dōgen implores the practitioner to “train as though you were attempting to save your head from being enveloped in flames.”²¹⁷ The flames, of course, are indicative of the torture of *samsāra*. With reference to his own teacher, Ju-ching, Dōgen illustrates the proper attitude of a contemplative in the ‘Ceaseless Training’ section of his *Shobogenzo*:

My late master used to say, ‘Ever since I was nineteen years old I made numerous visits to monasteries in search of Buddhism, but without finding a true teacher. During this period, not a day or a night passed without my doing *zazen* seated on a meditation cushion. Even before I became head monk of this temple I did not talk with those in my home village for fear that I would waste a single moment. I always lived in the meditation hall of the temple in which I resided, never entering anyone else’s hermitage or dormitory, not to mention going on pleasure trips to the mountains, lakes, and so on. Not only did I practice *zazen* at the appointed times in the meditation hall, but wherever and whenever it was possible to practice it I did so...it was my intention to sit so hard as to make this cushion fall into tatters. This was my only wish. As a result, my buttocks sometimes became inflamed, causing hemorrhoids; but I like *zazen* so much the better.’²¹⁸

Dōgen’s *Shikantaza* (‘just sitting’ meditation) simply involves “an unshakeable faith that sitting as the Buddha sat, with the mind void of all conceptions, of all beliefs and points of view, is the actualization or unfoldment of the inherently enlightened bodhi-mind with which all are endowed.”²¹⁹ In this practice, there is no striving for *satori* or any other object beyond the self. In this practice, the means and end converge as one. The only prerequisite for the practitioner is the unshakeable faith that his/her practice

²¹⁷ Yokoi, Yuho. *Zen Master Dōgen*. (New York, NY: Weatherhill, 1976), 48.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 31

²¹⁹ Kapleau, Roshi Philip. *The Three Pillars of Zen*. (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1989), 7.

will one day culminate into an ‘aha!’ moment, in which the direct realization of Buddha-nature will take place. For Dōgen, this realization is a moment of spontaneous recognition, not a realization achieved through the accumulation of merit or the mediation of grace. Dōgen recommends the following in his *A Universal Recommendation for Zazen (Fukan Zazengi)*:

Now, in doing *zazen* it is desirable to have a quiet room. You should be temperate in eating and drinking, forsaking all delusive relationships. Setting everything aside, think of neither good nor evil, right nor wrong. Thus, having stopped the various functions of your mind, give up even the idea of becoming a Buddha. This holds true not only for *zazen* but for all your daily actions.²²⁰

Zazen practice, which involves the shedding of all egoistic tendencies and dualistic conceptions, and the subsequent realization that all beings are unified in emptiness is, for Dōgen, the gateway to uncompromised peace and prosperity for all beings. Like the Buddha, Nāgārjuna and Dōgen recognized that it was the act of attaching a sense of ‘I-ness’ to the cognitive flux produced by the *pratītyasamutpāda* that led to differentiated perception and simultaneously disabled one’s recognition of the eternal presence of the undifferentiated Absolute (i.e., emptiness) in all things. Thus, they sought to extinguish every notion of ‘I,’ both intellectually and practically.

Kashmiri Shaiva Praxis

In his book, *The Self Aware Universe*, Amit Goswami illustrates the quantum mechanics of perception. According to him, the real experiencer, the

²²⁰ Yokoi, Yuho. *Zen Master Dōgen*. (New York, NY: Weatherhill, 1976), 46.

quantum self, is a ‘nonlocal’ consciousness, which transcends all objective apparatus’ and particular perceptions. The classical self, or ego, is a localized consciousness that arises on account of a 1/100 of a second time lag that takes place between the actual perception of an object, where the quantum self and the intended object of perception are one, and its subsequent acknowledgment, after which a subject-object distinction takes place. The quantum self, unaffected by the time lag, is indistinguishable from the intended object of perception; the classical self or ego, affected by the time lag, is distinguishable from the intended object of perception. Goswami says:

Our preoccupation with the secondary processes (indicated by the time lag) makes it difficult to be aware of our quantum self and to experience the pure mental states that are accessible at the quantum level of our operation....Evidence shows that meditation reduces the time lag between the primary and secondary processes.²²¹

Through the lens of Kashmir Shaivism, Kṣemaraja, in his *Spanda Samdoha*, explains how the seven perceivers are involved in each perceiver’s every act of perception. In the first movement or *tutī* of a perception, where there is only a tendency towards objective perception, the object and the subject are indistinguishable; this is the state of *aham bhava*, or pure I-ness (*Śiva tattva*). The next movement confers the experience of *aham-idam* (I am this); this is the state of *sadāśiva tattva*. Then arises the experience of *idam-aham* (this is I); this is the state of *īśvara tattva*. Next arises the state of *śūddhavidyā*, where pure I-ness and pure this-ness are experienced

²²¹ Amit Goswami, *The Self-Aware Universe*. (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1995), 194

simultaneously yet separately. Then in *viññānakala*, one experiences either I-ness without this-ness or this-ness without I-ness, but never both at the same time. *Pralayakala* represents the dissolution of both I-ness and this-ness into seed form. Finally, the *sakala pramatṛin* experiences a radical separation between I-ness and this-ness, where duality between subject and object becomes immanent. As Buddhādāsa noted previously with respect to the speed of *pratityasamutpada*, this process occurs in “a flash”, or as Goswami discovered, it takes place within the span of 1/100 of a second. Left unchecked, the quantum self (i.e., Lord Śiva, the supreme egoity) becomes the classical self (i.e., *sakala pramatṛi*, the limited ego), whose every perception is steeped in the realm of duality.

Kashmir Shaivism, like Christianity and Buddhism, agrees that the state of emptiness is the avenue through which the Absolute discloses itself, both as the One and as the Many. Kashmir Shaivism, like Christianity and Buddhism, recognizes that the individual, so steeped in dualistic cognitions and perceptions, is unable to grasp the pervasiveness of the One on account of being pacified by the particularities of the Many. Unlike Buddhism, however, Kashmir Shaivism and Christianity proclaim an existence beyond the state of void, affirming the existence of a permanent, substantive Self (i.e., God). In order to realize what St. Paul called the ‘hidden self’ (Eph 3:16), Kashmir Shaivism also calls for the achievement of kenosis, or self-emptying—initially.

Every individual, ranging from gods to worms, is a *sakala pramatrin*, concerned only with objectivity (*prakṛiti* to *prithivī tattva*) and are therefore objects themselves.²²² Here, *puruṣa* (the soul) is spellbound by all three impurities (*malas*) and is continually played by the fluctuating *guṇas*. *Sakala* lives in the realm of utter duality. In order to transcend this condition, Abhinavagupta prescribes the following:

Initially, one should suppress identification with the body and the other levels of the individual self—this is the ‘bowing down’ and so enter the state of immersion (*samāveśaḥ*) in which one realizes the supremacy of the nature of *Paramēśvara*. (*ĪśvaraPratyabhijñāvivṛti* Vol.1, p. 18, II. 3-5)²²³

Three means are prescribed in Kashmir Shaivism for “suppressing identification with the body and the other levels of the individual self” by way of thoughtlessness (viz., kenosis, *śūnya*): *Śambhavopāya*, the supreme means, *śaktopaya*, the medium means, and *āṇavopāya*, the inferior means. These are listed in descending order, with respect to the aspirant’s force of awareness (*vimarśa*). These are also listed in accordance with Śiva’s energies: *iccha śakti* (power of will), *jñāna śakti* (power of knowledge), and *kriya śakti* (power of action). Consequently, these means are also known as *icchopaya*, *jñānopaya*, and *kriyopaya* respectively. *Śambhavopāya* is the path of willpower, *śaktopaya* is the path of cognition, and *āṇavopāya* is the path of

²²² You are what you perceive. *Puruṣa*, perceiving only objectivity, becomes an object. As an object, *puruṣa* assumes the position of being ‘played’ rather than being a ‘player.’ As such, the bound soul does *not* possess a free will. The aim in Shaiva praxis is to become the player.

²²³ Sanderson, Alexis. “A Commentary on the Opening Verses of the *Tantrasāra* of Abhinavagupta” in *Sāmarasya: Studies in Indian Arts, Philosophy, and Interreligious Dialogue In Honor of Bettina Baumer*, eds. Sadananda Das and Ernst Furlinger (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd., 2005), 91.

action.

The *upayas* are prescribed in accordance with one's force of awareness and therefore differ in their efficacy and speed in achieving thoughtlessness. The achievement of kenosis, acquired by the adoption of the three *upayas*, enables the adept to transcend all subject-object distinctions by overcoming what Goswami calls, the 'time lag' in the perceptive process. Once the adept is established in thoughtless, he/she attains to *pralayākala*. Abhinavagupta distinguishes two states of *pralayākala*: *apavedya* and *savedya*. Swami Lakshmanjoo explains:

[*Apavedya*] *pralayākala* is when all senses stop to function [and] mind stops to function...nothing is functioning and there is no awareness at the same time. *Savedya pralayākala* is the same state, but you are aware that everything is finished.²²⁴

Whereas Sāṃkhya-Yoga and Buddhism understand *pralayākala* to be the experience of final liberation (*citta vṛitti nirodhaḥ* and *śūnyāta* respectively), Kashmir Shaivism does not. Although *kārmamala* has ceased to function and the fluctuations of the *guṇas* have been transcended, *māyīyamala* and *āṇavamala* are still engaged at this stage. Although differentiated activity (viz., *kārmamala*) is subsided, differentiated cognitions continue to persist.²²⁵

Nevertheless, Swami Lakshmanjoo says:

²²⁴ Swami Lakshmanjoo original audio recording TĀ 4:30, commentary; Universal Shaiva Fellowship archive.

²²⁵ *Pralayākala* is likened to the state of deep sleep (*susupti*) in which subject-object distinctions seem to be suppressed. Upon awakening from this state, however, one remembers that he/she was in deep sleep through backward reference and thereby objectifies, i.e., differentiates, the void as inherently distinct from the perceiver of the void.

At first, this is the way; *pralayākala* is the way. From *sakala* you have to pass *pralayākala*, and then in *viññānākala*, then *śuddhavidyā*, then *īśvara* and then *sadāśiva* and finally in Śiva.²²⁶

The adept is capable of achieving *pralayākala* (viz., kenosis, *śūnyata*) by his/her own effort-driven practice of any of the three *upaya*'s. Swami Lakshman Joo translates a verse from the *Spanda Kārikā* describing the required attitude of the contemplative engaged in these practices:

The yogi must first possess such a determined longing that it will lead to the resolution, "I will sit until I attain the state of God consciousness or I will leave my body." The effort must be filled with such determination. It must not be passive effort; it must be active effort. That active effort itself is God Consciousness. (*SpandaKārikā* 2.6)

Like Dōgen, the *Spanda Kārikā* emphasizes the oneness of practice and realization. One's ascension into the higher states of consciousness, however, is made possible only by the support of grace (*śaktipata*), which confers the internal longing and active determination required for realizing God consciousness, which, as the *Spanda Kārikā* affirms, is itself God consciousness.

Beyond the experience of *pralayākala* lies *viññānākala*, which is subtly distinct from *śavedya pralayākala*.²²⁷ *Viññānākala* is the first stage in which pure consciousness and pure *svātantrya* (absolute freedom) are experienced, albeit in a flickering and unstable manner; sometimes the adept experiences absolute consciousness (*aham bhava*) without absolute freedom (*idam*

²²⁶ Swami Lakshmanjoo original audio recording TĀ 4:30, commentary; Universal Shaiva Fellowship archive.

²²⁷ Whereas *śavedya pralayākala* is experienced in the subconscious state, *viññānākala* is experienced in the conscious state. (TĀ 9:109)

bhava), sometimes the adept experiences absolute freedom without absolute consciousness. This condition is caused by *āṇavamala*, which, although tending towards its dissolution (*didhvaṁsiṣuḥ*), continues to persist.²²⁸ This state of *viññānākala*, Swami Lakshmanjoo tells us, is understood by Advaita Vedānta to be final liberation, or *ānanda rūpata*.²²⁹ The remaining portion of one's ascent into the higher states of awareness (*śuddhavidyā*, *īśvara*, *sadāśiva*, and *Śiva/Śakti*) represent the experience of absolute consciousness²³⁰ and absolute freedom,²³¹ which also denote the experience of absolute I-ness (*aham bhava*) and absolute this-ness (*idaṁ bhava*) respectively, in ascending degrees of coalescence.

According to most Hindu traditions, it is the 'impurity' (*malaḥ*) that prevents the soul's liberation, though imperceptible, is a substance (*dravyam*), that therefore what is needed to remove it is not gnosis (*jñānam*) but action (*kriyā*, *vyāpārah*), and that the only action capable of bringing about this effect is the ceremony of initiation performed by Śiva himself through the person of the guru.²³² Aside from the stature of the guru, Kashmir Shaivism argues that the 'impurity' to be overcome is not a

²²⁸ The gradual process of *āṇavamala*'s dissolution continues up to *sadāśiva*, expiring completely at the state of *Śiva/Śakti*.

²²⁹ According to Swami Lakshmanjoo, this was the extent of Śri Ramakrishna's experience, whom he called a *pukka* (proper) Vedāntin.

²³⁰ *Cit śakti* and *ānanda śakti*.

²³¹ *Icchā śakti*, *jñāna śakti*, and *kriyā śakti*.

²³² Sanderson, Alexis. "Swami Lakshman Joo and His Place in the Kashmirian Śaiva Tradition" in *Samvidullāśah*, ed. Bettina Baumer and Sarla Kumar (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2007), 114.

substance existing apart from God; it must be of the very fabric of God. According to Kashmir Shaivism, ‘impurity’ is nothing but ignorance of one’s identity with Śiva and it is therefore knowledge of that identity rather than the action of ritual that has the power to remove it.²³³

The Kashmiri Shaiva initiation is intended first and foremost as an event upon which the initiate experiences a complete realization of Self (*Ātmasaṁskaārah*), in which one’s so-called impurities come to be known as one’s own glories/energies. The efficacy of this transformative ritual is dependent upon two factors: the receptivity of the disciple and the spiritual prowess of the *guru* (teacher/initiator). Just as it is the case for St. Paul, kerygma is of fundamental importance in the Kashmiri Shaiva rite of initiation. The efficacy of the rite is primarily dependent upon the initiators’ intellectual knowledge (*bauddha jñāna*) and spiritual understanding (*pauruṣa jñāna*). The *Mālinīvijayottaratantra* says:

What the officiant should think when about to commence a ceremony of initiation: (i) It is I that am the highest category (*tattvam*), (ii) In me this whole universe is located, (iii) I am the controller and author of all, (iv) It is when a creature has attained equality with me that he is said to be liberated (*muktaḥ*). *Mālinīvijayottaratantra* 9.52-53b.²³⁴

This declaration indicates the officiant’s complete identification with Lord Śiva, which must not be the product of empty conjecture, but rather, the

²³³ Sanderson, Alexis. “Swami Lakshman Joo and His Place in the Kashmirian Śaiva Tradition” in *Samvidullāsaḥ*, ed. Bettina Baumer and Sarla Kumar (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2007), 115.

²³⁴ Sanderson, Alexis. “The Doctrine of the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra*” in *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism. Studies in Honor of Andre Padoux*, ed. T. Toudriaan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 299.

product of the initiators' lived spiritual experience. The officiant is to assert that he *is* Śiva not because the text subscribes to nondualism but because he is to qualify himself for the ritual by believing fervently in the doctrine that it is not he that is about to liberate the soul of the insentient but Śiva residing in his person and working through him.²³⁵ Needless to say, there are very few who have come to such a realization and therefore, very few who are capable of initiating others. However, for those who have been fortunate enough to find a *guru* of the required caliber, there are rites to be observed.

Prior to initiation, the *guru* prescribes a *mantra*, which is to be recited by the disciple for an extended period. This mantra is to be kept secret, revealed to no one so as to maintain its power in the mind of the disciple. The recitation of the mantra, which is usually no more than two syllables in length and does not necessarily possess any philosophical or theological significance,²³⁶ functions to facilitate the disciple in the process of self-emptying. Years later, the disciple undergoes the actual initiatory rite. As Alexis Sanderson notes, “the distinction drawn here between the giving of the *mantra* (*mantropadeśaḥ*) and *dīkṣā* proper is that between the preliminary

²³⁵ Sanderson, Alexis. “The Doctrine of the Mālinīvijayottaratantra” in *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism. Studies in Honor of Andre Padoux*, ed. T. Toudriaan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 300.

²³⁶ There are many mantra's that do convey theological, even ontological significance, such as *sauḥ*, which signifies the following: letter 'sa' represents the 31 *tattvas*, from *māyā* to *prithvi*. Letter 'au' is the *trishula bīja* (seed of the three-spoked weapon) representing the three energies of Lord Śiva (*īccha*, *jñāna*, and *kriya śakti*) that correspond to the three śuddha *tattvas*, or pure elements (*śūddhaviḍya*, *īśvara*, and *sadaśiva*). *Ḥ*, or *visarga*, represents the Absolute element (Śiva and Śakti) and is written as a colon (:). The *sauḥ* mantra is indicative of the totality of the 36 elements. This mantra is not to be uttered aloud; it is to be recited internally.

samayadīkṣā that makes one a *samayī* and the full initiation known as the *nirvāṇadīkṣā* which makes one a [*nirvāṇa*] *dīkṣitaḥ* (/putrakah).²³⁷

With the actual initiation, comes a ‘knowing’ of Parameśvara or Self. Consequently, the devotee’s *sadhana* (practice) becomes fruitful on account of a ‘knowing’ acquired by his/her initiation under a fully realized guru. Praxis works only because it is a form of knowing, a contemplation of reality supported by encoding in symbolic action; and secondly, and more radically, the ritual actions are dispensable for those who can sustain that knowledge without their support, this self-knowing rather than its own forms being the essence of the worship of Maheśvara who is indeed none other than one’s own innermost identity.²³⁸ Having acquired the highest knowledge, the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra* describes the simplicity of one’s subsequent worship:

He has only to touch some liquid substance to accomplish his ritual bath (*snānam*). He has only to inhale the fragrant powder, flowers and the like to accomplish his presentation of offerings to the deities (*yajanam*). Simply relishing food serves as the offering of nourishment to the deities (*naivedyam*). To accomplish his recitation of mantras (*japaḥ*) he may utter any sound he chooses. His sacrifice in the fire (*homah*) endures for as long as his awareness is immersed while focused on that [sound] in the contemplation of the flames of anything burning. As for the divine image to be visualized in his worship (*dhānam*), this may be anything on which he chooses to rest his gaze. - *Mālinīvijayottaratantra* 18.44c-48b.²³⁹

Abhinavagupta further clarifies this method in his masterpiece, *The Light on*

²³⁷ Sanderson, Alexis. “Swami Lakshman Joo and His Place in the Kashmirian Śaiva Tradition” in *Samvidullāsaḥ*, ed. Bettina Baumer and Sarla Kumar (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2007), 111.

²³⁸ Sanderson, Alexis. “A Commentary on the Opening Verses of the *Tantrasāra* of Abhinavagupta” in *Sāmarasya: Studies in Indian Arts, Philosophy, and Interreligious Dialogue In Honor of Bettina Baumer*, eds. Sadananda Das and Ernst Furlinger (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd., 2005), 135.

²³⁹ Sanderson, Alexis. “The Doctrine of the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra*” in *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism. Studies in Honor of Andre Padoux*, ed. T. Toudriaan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 297.

the Tantras (Tāntraloka):

The offerings are the objects of his senses; the recipient deity is his own consciousness; and the act of presentation is the fusion of the two through the contemplation that the reality of the perceived is entirely within that consciousness. - *Tāntraloka* 4.121c-122b.²⁴⁰

In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa invokes the same sentiment in the following hymn:

Brahman is the offering,
Brahman is the oblation
Poured out by Brahman into the fire of Brahman.
Brahman is to be attained by him
Who always sees Brahmin in action. (BG IV: 24)²⁴¹

According to Kashmir Shaivism, contemplative practice is intended to be a twenty-four-hour endeavor accomplished through any activity of one's own choosing, provided that it is informed by the knowledge of Self. Taking into account Kashmir Shaivism's monist ontology, true contemplative practice does not require the world-negation prescribed in Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Advaita Vedānta, Buddhism, or even Christianity. From an excerpt on his commentary of Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka*, Swami Lakshman Joo says:

Actually, renunciation does not direct you towards God consciousness; attachment diverts you towards God consciousness. When there is love, attachment [for God], it will carry you there. What can you renounce? You cannot renounce your body, you cannot renounce your hunger, you cannot renounce your thirst; you are still eating, you are still drinking. Actual renunciation is when you renounce your body consciousness and get mixed in God consciousness and that comes through attachment towards God—there must be love towards God consciousness.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Sanderson, Alexis. "The Doctrine of the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra*" in *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism. Studies in Honor of Andre Padoux*, ed. T. Toudriaan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 297.

²⁴¹ Sargeant, Winthrop. *The Bhagavad Gita* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 224.

²⁴² Swami Lakshmanjoo original audio recording *Tantrāloka* 9:179 commentary; Universal Shaiva Fellowship archive.

Lord Kṛiṣṇa alludes to the same:

Renunciation indeed, O Arjuna,
Is difficult to attain without yoga;
The sage who is disciplined in yoga
Quickly attains Brahman. (BG V, 6)²⁴³

Yoga literally means ‘union’ or ‘yoke.’ Patañjali’s *Yoga Sutra* defines *yoga* as *citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ*, the ceasing of the thought processes. According to Kashmir Shaivism, however, the ultimate union (*pramiti bhava*) extends beyond mere thoughtlessness. For Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Jainism, and Advaita Vedānta, the disunion (*ayoga*) of spirit (*puruṣa*) from matter (*prakṛiti / māyā*) reveals the Absolute. For Kashmir Shaivism, on the other hand, matter (*prakṛiti/māyā*) and the world of differentiation are the very expressions of the Absolute. Consequently, Kashmir Shaivism calls for the realization of the actual and fundamental unity of matter and spirit; in Jungian terms, psychic wholeness achieved through the ‘royal marriage’ of the unconscious and the conscious. In Kashmir Shaivism, this ‘marriage’ is called *pramiti bhava* and is achievable through *bhakti* (devotion) for Lord Śiva (God), who is observed and adored through His glory, the objective world. Real devotion (*bhakti*) occurs when one perceives each and every object as the glamour of one’s own independently blissful consciousness. *Pramiti* is that state where objectivity and cognitivity are completely dissolved within subjectivity; where the world of differentiation is no longer perceived as external to oneself. This is also

²⁴³ John Sargeant, trans., *The Bhagavad Gita* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 248.

called the state of *nirvikalpakam*, which is distinguished from the *avikalpa* (thoughtless void) of Buddhism and Sāṃkhya-Yoga. *Nirvikalpa* is the subjective ‘reservoir’ where all differentiated knowledge resides undifferentiatedly.

According to Kashmir Shaivism, liberation is achieved, not by shunning the world, but rather by enjoying the world—correctly. What does this mean? For this, let me revisit the mechanics of the five great acts of consciousness (*pañca kṛitya*). The *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* describes, in a more empirically precise manner, the five great acts “As Manifesting (*ābhāsana*), relishing (*rakti*), dissolution (*vimarśana*) settling of the seed (*bījāvasthāpana*), and experiencing as self (*vilāpanatastāni*).”²⁴⁴ The key element in this process is *rakti* (the act of relishing/preserving), for it is here that either *saṃsāra* or *mokṣa* (liberation) is acquired by way of *saṃskāra* (impressions). If one ‘relishes’ (*sthithi*) manifestation (*sṛṣṭi*) in a differentiated manner, upon its dissolution (*vimarśa*²⁴⁵/*saṃhara*), the seed/impression of differentiation will germinate into continued differentiated perceptions by way of subsequent manifestations/creations, which will conceal (*tirodhana*) one’s true nature, thus enabling the experience of limited I-consciousness and the continuation of *saṃsāra*. If one relishes manifestation in an

²⁴⁴ Jaideva Singh, *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass 1977), 76.

²⁴⁵ *Vimarśa*: awareness is the act of knowing or recognizing, and when the object of knowledge becomes known or recognized, it is absorbed in the subject and its ‘objective’ existence is destroyed (*saṃhara*).

undifferentiated manner, the seed/impression of undifferentiation will, upon its dissolution, germinate into continued undifferentiated perceptions by way of proceeding manifestations/creations, which will reveal (*anugraha*) one's true nature, thus enabling the experience of universal I-consciousness and the subsequent attainment of *mokṣa* (liberation). Kṣemaraja says: "Those who always ponder over this (fivefold act of the Lord), knowing the universal as an unfolding of the essential nature (of consciousness), become liberated in this very life."²⁴⁶

Conclusion

The soteriology of Christianity, Buddhism, and Kashmir Shaivism involves the liberation *from* ignorance, *from* sin. Whereas Buddhist and Kashmiri Shaiva kerygma recognizes the radical oneness of the One and the Many, Christian kerygma (much like Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Advaita Vedānta, and Jainism) has tended toward a radical duality between the One and the Many, emphasizing the *dissimilarity* of the Absolute and creation. As such, the degree of the Absolute's transcendence does, ontologically and practically speaking, exceed its immanence according to predominant Christian discourse. Consequently, salvation entails a separation from the world of the Many. Christian praxis is said to lead to the "beatific vision" in which one perceives God face to face. In other words, even with the experience of

²⁴⁶ Jaideva Singh, *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass 1977), 74-75.

salvation, a radical duality between mankind and God is preserved. Buddhism and Kashmir Shaivism, on the other hand, emphasize the radical *similarity* of the Absolute and creation and subsequently call for the recognition of the world, in all of its aspects, as it truly is, which is none other than the glory and “vocabulary” of the One. According to these traditions, praxis leads to the recognition of absolute identity (*abhinnatā*) and immersion (*samaveṣa*) with what is already there just as Jacob, much like Śakyamuni, had discovered: “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” (Gn 28:17)

The doctrine of Original Sin has played a significant role in the proclaimed chasm between God and creation in the Christian tradition. As a result of this doctrine, the formulation of which is primarily attributable to St. Paul and St. Augustine, Christian spirituality has been concerned with correcting humanity’s *relationship* with God, which is rectified only through the Incarnation. According to Buddhism and Kashmir Shaivism, however, there cannot be a “relationship” between the One and the Many because the One *is* the Many.²⁴⁷ For them, the Absolute is not dissimilar to creation but rather, radically similar to it, which is made evident by their explicit prescriptions for recognizing the One *in* and *through* the Many. The One, according to Buddhism and Kashmir Shaivism, is known through identity, never dissimilarity, the conclusion of which appears to be confirmed both by

²⁴⁷ A relationship implies the existence of at least two distinct entities.

the biblical and Christian mystical witness.

As I have discussed, the biblical witness has shown that humanity's Fall resulted immediately after consuming the fruit of differentiated knowledge and Christian mystics, who, by discontinuing the consumption of this fruit through contemplative practices, bore witness to the all-encompassing and inalienable presence of God in the world. Other such examples include Dante's *Divine Comedy*, in which Beatrice explains to the poet that the figures they encounter on their travels through the levels of heaven and hell are not truly separated spatially from each other or from God.²⁴⁸ Similarly, in C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters*, the devil Screwtape informs his nephew that "The great (and toothsome) sinners are made out of the very same material as those horrible phenomena the great Saints."²⁴⁹ Most profoundly, Meister Eckhart describes "how God tastes himself and how, in this tasting, he tastes all creatures, not as creatures but rather as God."²⁵⁰ Humanity's error (i.e., sin), then, is more than clear: differentiated perception. The cure, as the aforementioned traditions concur, requires a "dying to self," to egotism, which requires the overcoming of differentiated cognitions and coincident perceptions.

My last course in the theology program here at Loyola Marymount

²⁴⁸ Heim, S. Mark. *Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion*. (New York: Orbis Books 1995), 164.

²⁴⁹ Lewis, C.S. *The Screwtape Letters*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 120.

²⁵⁰ Elizabeth Hense and Frans Maas, "Current Perspective on Spirituality in Northwestern Europe" in *Spiritus* 11.1 (2011): 69.

University was Spiritual Direction. The goal of Spiritual Direction, as I understood it, is to assist the directee discern what *is* and *is not* a movement of the Spirit in his/her own active life. The premise that there are movements *other* than the movements of the Spirit was particularly troubling for me because I could not reconcile this type of discernment with the fundamental unity of the One and the Many as it has been attested to by the mystical and scholarly witnesses of the aforementioned traditions. Throughout the duration of the course, the question that continually arose in my mind was: “what is *not* the movement of the Spirit?” Nevertheless, we find ourselves compelled to account for evil, selfish, and hurtful thoughts and actions.

Admittedly, there will be much agreement in terms of what is understood to be objectively good and objectively bad. There will, however, also be much disagreement. For example, an evildoer such as Hitler rejoices in doing evil actions and in fact, considers his evil actions to be good. For him, the ‘objective good’ is perceived as an ‘objective evil,’ which he will avoid at all costs because he experiences it to be a painful. The goodhearted person, on the other hand, will experience quite the opposite. He/she will rejoice only in doing good actions and will experience great pain in doing or witnessing evil actions. Both persons are in a quandary because they are continually torn between their perceptions and felt experiences of good and evil. On account of this preoccupation, their emotions are continually in flux; sometimes they are joyous, sometimes they are sad and depressed, ever remaining in a shrunken

and distracted state of being. Both the evildoer and the goodhearted person will experience the same set of emotions, all of which are the result of ‘knowing’ (i.e., differentiating) good and evil.

No matter one’s disposition, be they toward good or evil actions, their continued involvement within this cognitive and emotional rollercoaster completely detracts one’s attention from “the one thing necessary” (Lk 10:42): uncompromised devotion to God, who is readily observed in and through *all* of His ‘images,’ not just human, that comprise creation. These images, however, do not always appear to exude divinity, but God is (must be!) there, *omnes en omnibus*, wholly present in each and every particle of the universe and must, therefore, be recognizable as such. Until such unity is realized, the adversity of diversity will remain strong in the minds of mankind. Their differing likes and dislikes are continually at odds with one another, which ultimately culminate into catastrophes on the grandest of scales. The consumption of differentiated knowledge will lead to much turmoil, just as YHWH had foretold: “By toil shall you eat of it, all the days of your life.”²⁵¹

This is not to say, however, that one should indulge in evil actions just because there is ‘no such thing as evil.’ My master, Swami Lakshman Joo, always instructed us to commit ourselves to good actions because they resemble the goodness of God and consequently bring one closer to ‘knowing’ God—the is also the fruit of *Yoga*, i.e., preserving thoughtlessness, which

²⁵¹ Genesis 3:17.

must be done always. *Yoga* is not to be adopted [for only] one hour, two hours in the morning....*Yoga* is to be adopted *satatam*—always. Always means while you are sitting do *yoga*, while you are talking do *yoga* . . .be aware!²⁵²

For those who are incapable of performing *yoga*, they must strictly commit themselves to performing good actions and refrain from committing bad actions as it is prescribed in the Decalogue and Patañjali's *Yoga Sutra* (viz., the *Yamas* and *Niyamas*). A yogi, however, remains unaffected by good and bad actions. Swami Lakshman Joo says:

[Yogi's] have not *dvaidhā*, they have not two things in view...sinful acts and good acts, they do not remain before them. *Sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ*, they are bent upon producing glamour everywhere in the world...in good and bad actions also. But that takes time in them to get this; this is expansion. It will take time. It may take one or two lives, or three lives or four lives or hundred lives; one does not know.²⁵³

Since the abovementioned scriptural and mystical testimonies confirm that everything is, in fact, composed of the Spirit (i.e., God) and therefore everything must be the very movement of the Spirit, a spiritual director need not be concerned with discerning what is and is not the movement of the Spirit—this, in my opinion, is the wrong question. The real question is: what inhibits us from recognizing everything as Spirit and what are the means for its recognition? In order to answer these questions, spiritual directors must be able to a) intellectually grasp the necessary ontology, b) know the cause of its concealment and c) personally bear witness to the absolute providence of

²⁵² Swami Lakshmanjoo, original audio recording Grace and Practice, vs. 11, commentary, Universal Shaiva Fellowship archive.

²⁵³ Swami Lakshmanjoo, original audio recording Grace and Practice, vs. 25., commentary; Universal Shaiva Fellowship archive.

the Spirit through ceaseless kenotic practices. Only then can one ‘direct’ another upon the spiritual path, which, essentially, is a kenotic path.

Christian scholars have deemed man’s original fall from grace to be a *felix culpa*, a fortunate fall. Living in ignorance (i.e., sin), humanity is capable of re-cognizing and rejoicing in the truth whereas in the state of grace, there was no possibility of cognizing humanity’s oneness with God because there was no perceived apartness. Jesus also alluded to the fortuitous nature of the fall in his parable of the prodigal son’s triumphant and joy-filled return to his father. For Kashmir Shaivism and Hinduism in general, ignorance and creation in general is God’s (i.e., our) play (*līla*). God’s playful act, according to Kashmir Shaivism, is the action of His *svatantrya śakti*, His absolute freedom, which manifests as the Many, the innumerable genus and species that comprise creation. In Kashmir Shaivism, the entire collection of universal beings, sentient and insentient, are called the *kula*, the family.

Swami Lakshman Joo tells us:

This is the Kingdom of God, in the body of God. This is only Kingdom of God. And that God is *svatantrya*-independent; *cidrūpa*, filled with consciousness; *svabhāvata prakāśa ātmā*, by nature He is all light. And by His divine playful act he has become many. (Grace - Audio 1 Track 2 v. 103)

With consideration to monist theology, one can see the rational behind this ‘play’ of God. Imagine, if you will, that you are the only one who exists, such as it is the case for God. The desire to perceive yourself would naturally arise with great force. We experience this urge in our own lives, when we feel compelled to see our own reflection in a mirror or when we try desperately to

find acceptance in another person. The play of creation, according to Kashmir Shaivism, is simply for the sake of recognizing or, as Meister Eckhart would say, “tasting” one’s own nature through the innumerable sentient and insentient beings that comprise creation; a play that stars One actor (God) playing the roles of the myriad characters, props, and stages that comprise creation, driven by an incessant desire to conceal Himself in order to recognize and embrace Himself in countless ways. The purpose of life, then, is to know and love thyself. The mission is to retrace our steps and overcome our self-imposed ignorance, which is caused by consuming the fruit of differentiated knowledge (viz., the *guṇas*, which are given weight by *māyā*, the *malas*, and the *kañcukas*, absorbed in the *puryaṣṭaka*), by first adopting kenotic contemplative practices, and, grace permitting, return triumphantly into the Edenic state of being with an invigorated appreciation of its reality, of *our* reality.

As this discussion has been a strictly intellectual analysis, we must understand the role of intellectual knowledge (*bauddha jñana*) in relation to practice and actual experience (*pauruṣa jñāna*). Intellectual knowledge enables one to know a) where one is situated and b) where one is headed (*anusaṁdhāna*). This knowledge directs the aspirant to strive for the highest level of experience and subsequently enables her/him to recognize and accept the subtle experiences as they arise, be they through practice or grace. With the support of intellectual knowledge acquired through scripture (*śāstra*)

and/or a spiritual preceptor (*guru*), together with an unfaltering faith (*śraddhā*) in their proclamations, the aspirant comes to be free from doubt (*śaṅkā*)²⁵⁴ and is able to avoid being misled or hesitant while traversing upon the ‘razors edge’ that is the spiritual path.

²⁵⁴ Doubt is the [aspirant’s] greatest obstacle; doubt constitutes the firm bars of the prison of *saṃsāra* and it is this doubt [the aspirant] must overcome (See TĀ, 12/18b-25), Mark S.G. Dyczkowski, *The Canon of the Śaivāgama and the Kujjika Tantras of the Western Kaula Tradition*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988), 161n.10.

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